

**A SOCIAL HISTORY
OF
ENGLAND**

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M.A.

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A SOCIAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND

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PREFACE.

THE primary object of this volume is to supply within reasonable compass a text-book suitable for use in Colleges and Upper Forms of schools and dealing with such matters of social and economic history as are not to be found in the ordinary history text-books, which as a rule devote themselves solely to political and constitutional topics. The author hopes, however, that this account of the social life of the English people will also be of interest to the general reader and that it may serve students of economic history as an introduction to their subject. Incidentally it may be mentioned that the work covers fully the social and economic requirements of the latest syllabus for the Intermediate Arts Examination in History of the University of London.

The size of the book has necessitated drastic compression and the omission of various sides of social life; however the author has endeavoured to devote his space to the more important social movements and theories of economic and social life. Special attention has been paid to the development of the Colonies, the author holding that the Colonies by their simpler life and comparative freedom from traditions have afforded a suitable field for social experiments which have not only resulted in improved social conditions but have also suggested reforms to the Mother-Country. It is highly probable that as a result of the European War the influence of the Colonies on the

social conditions of England will be increasingly important and that the Empire will become more and more an economic and social unity.

There remains the pleasing duty of acknowledging indebtedness to the writings of others. It was perhaps not necessary in a work of this kind to give detailed references, but the author has freely availed himself of Dr. W. Cunningham's *Growth of English Industry and Commerce*, and for the earlier period has also used with profit Mr. E. Lipson's *Economic History of England, Vol. I.* Professor Hewins' *English Trade and Finance*, Miss E. M. Leonard's *Early History of English Poor Relief* and *A History of Factory Legislation* by Miss B. L. Hutchins and Miss A. Harrison (Dr. Spencer) have been found useful on those special topics, while for the later period Mr. Edward Cressy's *An Outline of Industrial History* is invaluable. For the Colonial History, Professor H. E. Egerton's *A Short History of British Colonial Policy* has been largely followed. For his other authorities the author must content himself with a general acknowledgement of thanks.

The author has endeavoured to make this volume as clear and trustworthy as possible, but he would be glad if his readers would forward to him, care of the publishers, any suggestions they can make for its improvement, and a note of any errors or ambiguities which they may detect.

NOTE TO SECOND EDITION.

The text of the original edition has been altered as little as possible, but the author has availed himself of the opportunity to correct a few ambiguities of statement pointed out by kindly critics whom he thanks. He has also re-written one or two paragraphs to bring them up to date.

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THE SOCIAL HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

1. THE ORIGIN OF THE RACE.

The Stone Age.—Before Britain became an island a scanty population of men of the Old Stone Age (*Palaeolithic*) seems to have lived here, but little is known of them, and they have few, if any, representatives among modern Englishmen. Much more important were the men of the New Stone Age (*Neolithic*), who are undoubtedly the ancestors of a considerable proportion of the dark-haired population of our days. The Neolithic people, sometimes called Ivernians or Iberians, are now represented in their purest form by the Basques of Northern Spain. They were short of stature and of a swarthy complexion, and as they buried their dead in oval or long barrows together with food-vessels of pottery and implements of war and the chase, we know a little more of them than of their predecessors. Both races used weapons made of stone—generally of flint—but the Neolithic men had learnt how to till the ground and make rude clearings in the forest. They had abandoned the cave

and the river drift for the more comfortable hut, and they possessed sufficient knowledge of engineering to rear the stone circles of which Stonehenge is the best known example. They kept domestic animals such as sheep, pigs, dogs, and goats, and were acquainted with the arts of spinning and weaving. They also knew how to build boats, even though these were only wicker coracles, for when they came to Britain it was already an island.

Coming of the Celts.—The men of the New Stone Age lived in scattered and generally warring clans, and a few centuries before the Christian Era they began to fall a prey to a race of invaders we call the Celts. These latter were an "Aryan"¹ race who flowed into Western Europe in successive waves, perhaps from Central Asia. They were tall, strong men of fair complexion and reddish hair. They were armed with swords and spears of bronze, and on the coasts of the English Channel and the Bay of Biscay acquired a knowledge of seamanship which they used both for trade and for conquering Britain.

Goidels and Brythons.—The first Celtic invaders are known as Goidels, and their descendants are now found in Ireland and the Scottish Highlands, and perhaps to some extent in the West of England. It is highly probable that they took advantage of the internecine wars of the Neolithic peoples to destroy or enslave them. After an uncertain interval the Goidels were followed by the Brythons, from whom Britain got its name. Probably the Brythons had become acquainted with

¹ The old name has been retained with some hesitation. It is more scientific to divide the early peoples of Europe into three main groups, Mediterranean Man, Alpine Man, and Northern or Boreal Man, of which the Ivernians, the Celts, and the Teutons are the respective types in Britain.

the use of iron before they in turn crossed to Britain. They were certainly able to oust the Goidels from control in the south-east of the Island, but they probably contented themselves with being lords of a subject Neolithic population, at least in the centre and west. Neither Goidels nor Brythons would be in sufficient numbers to make extermination of the natives either possible or desirable, and the Celt had not the Greek's motive for race purity—the city-state. We know from Caesar that one Neolithic people at least—the Silures—maintained their separate existence in South Wales in his day, and anthropology does not support the view that the present population of Britain is of homogeneous origin.

The Belgae and the Gauls.—Before the coming of the Romans there were two other accretions to the population of Britain. Welsh legends tell how the Belgae, who lived in the neighbourhood of Winchester—*Venta Belgarum*—had found a home in Britain when their own land—probably some portion of the Low Countries—had been devastated by an inundation of the sea. Just before Caesar's invasion in 55 B.C. a certain number of Gauls had crossed the Channel and settled in Kent and along the east coast, and Caesar remarks on the more advanced civilisation of these districts. His own expedition was undertaken largely as a result of the help sent from Britain to the Gaulish tribes against whom he was fighting.

Visits of Pytheas and Posidonius.—We know curiously little about the state of Celtic Britain except from the writings of Pytheas, Posidonius, and Caesar himself. Pytheas was a Greek sent by the merchants of Massilia (Marseilles) about 330 B.C. to trace the source of the trade in tin which the Carthaginians desired to keep as

the monopoly of their own merchants. Apparently he travelled westwards from Kent to the tin districts, probably modern Cornwall, and besides describing the shafts and mines from which the tin was procured, he tells us of the fields of wheat which he observed. He adds that, owing to the damp and uncertain climate, the wheat had to be threshed in great barns. We are told of the cultivated fruits and domestic animals of the inhabitants, and how they made a special drink of wheat and honey, probably mead. However, we must assume that the outlying parts of the land were less advanced in civilisation, for the account of Posidonius, who visited Britain in the first century before Christ, describes very primitive agricultural operations as prevailing in some districts.

Wild State of Early Britain.—Probably population in Britain was scanty in early days except on the southern plain. Even in the south vast forests swept with scarcely a break between the Thames and the Channel. The Weald and the New Forest are survivals, while the Forests of Arden and Dean in the west, Epping Forest in the east, and Charnwood and Sherwood Forests in the north represent but feebly the former primeval woodlands. The six northern counties and Wales were a vast wilderness, where wild beasts struggled for the mastery with almost wilder men. Only in forest clearings and in sheltered river valleys was human habitation possible, for the river mouths were dismal swamps, of which the Wash and Hatfield Chase lingered almost to our day. Wild animals were so abundant that even in Henry II.'s reign wild boars could be found on Hampstead Heath, as well as the wild cattle that now only survive at Chillingham Park in Northumberland. According to local tradition the last wolf was killed in the reign of Charles I. in the neighbourhood of the Roman Wall.

Julius Caesar on the Britons.—Julius Caesar chiefly came into contact with the tribes in the south-east of the island, and he tells us that they resembled the Gauls in their mode of life. The inhabitants of the interior districts did not grow much grain, but lived mainly on the flesh and milk of their cattle, but the south-eastern peoples were agriculturists and used marl as a fertiliser. They lived in comfortable circular houses, and practised with great skill the arts of spinning and weaving. Further inland, however, the natives wore the skins of wild beasts and painted their bodies with the blue dye called woad. The men shaved off the hair from all parts of their faces except the upper lip. Caesar also refers to their use of coined money, and to the tin mines of Cornwall and the iron ore of Sussex. The Britons exported tin, ores, slaves, and skins to the Continent and received in return articles of luxury. For the most part the natives lived in scattered villages under their tribal chieftains, each of whom desired to make himself head of the rest. Naturally Caesar and his successors found them in their divided state an easy prey.

Druidism.—It is convenient to call the natives Ancient Britons, but we must bear in mind that they were probably not wholly Celtic in origin, except perhaps among the governing classes. They worshipped many gods, but the Druidic priesthood—the chief Celtic contribution—seems to have been a strong bond of union among the Britons. The Druids were the counsellors of the chiefs and inspired a fierce resistance to the Romans. They were also the teachers of the young. They are said to have taught the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, and there may have been an esoteric religion among the initiated few, but to the common people they preached that the gods could only be appeased by human sacrifices, and they

professed to be able to divine the future by inspecting the entrails of human victims. Perhaps Druids from Gaul took refuge in Britain from the conquering Romans. Certainly when the Romans began their final conquest of Britain in 43 A.D. the Druids were the soul of the national resistance, until their power was broken in the massacre that followed the capture of Mona (Anglesey) by Suetonius Paulinus in 61 A.D.

Roman Influences.—For nearly four hundred years the Romans remained in Britain. Probably they contributed little to the blood of the present inhabitants, and still less—directly at all events—to their civilisation. They left behind a splendid series of military roads joining camp to camp. They rebuilt certain British settlements such as London and made them Roman commercial cities. But these Roman cities were inhabited mainly by discharged veteran soldiers or immigrants from the Continent, although perhaps from Agricola's time (78-84 A.D.) some of the Britons in the southern districts became more or less civilised. Tacitus, his son-in-law, tells us how Agricola conciliated the natives by his strict justice, and persuaded many of the chiefs to adopt the comforts and luxuries of Roman civilisation. Perhaps city life might have been found in certain favoured spots towards the end of the Roman period, but it is doubtful if Roman civilisation extended far beyond the *territorium* or district surrounding the Romanised city.

Outside the city's limits the natives seem to have retained their old customs almost unaltered. In the north and west, the wilder parts of the country, the native chiefs owed the Romans a merely nominal allegiance, and the garrison of Hadrian's Wall had to defend themselves against the wild Brigantes who lived south of the Wall as well as against the Picts from the north. With the pos-

sible exceptions of Eboracum (York) and Corstopitum (near Corbridge) all the Roman settlements in the north were purely military, and Roman civilisation seems to have had little hold except in the lowland plains of southern Britain. The Romans were attracted to the west by the tin mines of Cornwall and the lead of the Mendips, and the healing "Waters of the Sun" (*Aquae Sulis*), as the Romans called Bath, were undoubtedly responsible for the civilisation of that region.

It is true that remains of Roman villas or country houses have been found far away from the cities, and we can believe that there were many great estates worked by *coloni* or semi-servile farmers: in these cases it is most probable that the Roman lord merely stepped into the place of a Celtic predecessor who had worked the estate by means of the descendants of an earlier conquered race. There is no indication that Roman agricultural implements displaced those in use among the Celts or that Roman methods of tillage prevailed where they differed from those previously followed. Probably the Romans had little more influence on the ordinary life of the people than the English have in India, and there is no reason to suppose that the Latin tongue was spoken outside the cities, seeing that the Auxiliary troops who formed so large a part of the garrison were drawn from "barbarian" races.

The Withdrawing of the Romans.—Much of the civilisation that flourished in Britain was due to the trade that was carried on with the Continent, especially from London, which was probably a considerable port even before the coming of the Romans. Roman Britain exported its old products of slaves, skins, and tin, and in addition lead and a certain amount of grain in later years. Its oysters were famous, but the value of its black pearls was perhaps exaggerated by the partiality of Bede. However, it is

impossible to believe that Britain was really prosperous. Diocletian's establishment of a military despotism towards the end of the third century certainly gave the Empire a new lease of life, but the increased taxation completed the ruin of the *curiales* or middle classes of the towns who were made responsible for it. The only self-government in the Empire was in the Army, and the Provincials were even forbidden to defend themselves with troops of their own race. During the fourth century the storm fell on unfortunate Britain with redoubled violence. British youths had been taken to defend the western frontier of the Empire against the German barbarians, and again and again the alien and largely barbarian legions and Auxiliaries who ought to have defended Britain had been led away on Continental adventures by would-be "Emperors" and had never returned. Two "Dukes of the Britains" in turn, Maximus and Constantine, had deprived the Roman wall of its garrison, and for some years before the actual withdrawal of Roman rule the Picts had invaded Britain at their pleasure.

Britain and the "Barbarian" Invasion.—However, the more dangerous invaders were the Angles and Saxons. In the third century a Roman official called the "Count of the Saxon Shore" had been appointed to defend south-eastern Britain against these raiders both by land and sea. However, the Romans gradually lost command of the North Sea and the English Channel, and despite the victories of Theodosius the Great at the end of the fourth century the sea raiders did as they pleased. It is possible that the Saxon Shore in Britain as in Gaul took its name from a settlement of that people as Roman Auxiliaries. In 410 A.D. the Emperor Honorius abandoned even the pretence of defending Britain, and the wretched Provincials had to face unaided attacks from the north by the

Picts, and on the east and west coasts the ceaseless raiding of the Germanic tribes and the Irish-Scots respectively.

Helplessness of the Britons.—This is not the place to describe in any detail the Conquest of Britain by the Germanic peoples, but upon the view taken of that conquest will depend in a large measure our interpretation of Britain's later social history. After the first panic was over the Britons seem to have made a brave fight. Unfortunately they were quite unable to organise a *national* resistance to the twofold attacks by land and sea; and although the Romanised Britons seem to have endeavoured to defend their cities by retaining as far as possible the Roman organisation, the wilder natives relapsed into the old state of tribal warfare and apparently did not spare the British cities. Aetius, the last able general of the degenerate Emperor Valentinian, was forced to refuse the despairing appeal of the "cities of Britain" in 446 A.D., and three years later, according to legend, even before Valentinian had murdered the man who had saved him from the Huns, Vortigern, the British ruler of Kent, had attempted to copy the Roman plan of hiring Barbarians to fight barbarian Picts, with the same result—disaster. Perhaps Hengist and Horsa, the Jutish leaders of the legend, were really Frisians, and the whole story of the first English Settlement may be a post-dated version of the action of some despairing Roman official.

Legends of the Anglo-Saxon Conquest.—Even more fragmentary than the Kentish story are the accounts we get of the foundation of the other kingdoms of the Heptarchy. Careful examination proves that in its account of the fifth and sixth centuries the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle is scarcely more trustworthy than Gildas or Nennius, the British Chroniclers, although fragments of fact may be imbedded in the earlier legends of the Chronicle. How

are we to interpret its story of the capture of Anderida by famine and the slaying of its inhabitants by Aella, the founder of the kingdom of the South Saxons? Was the fate of Anderida emphasised because it was exceptional, or because it was typical of that of Roman Britain generally at the hands of the invaders? Are we to believe that the Teutons made a clean sweep of the earlier population, at least in Eastern Britain, and that in consequence the blood and institutions of England are purely Teutonic? The Danes, the Northmen, and the Normans were certainly of Teutonic stock. The Flemings, who contributed an uncertain element in the eleventh, fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, were also largely if not wholly Teutonic. The Huguenots of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Irish of the nineteenth, and the Jews in a steadily growing stream from the middle of the seventeenth century were certainly not Teutonic; but they lived apart, and were generally of small importance in moulding the national life and character. The inhabitants of Modern England therefore draw their origin and their institutions from the amalgamation of Celtic and Teutonic stocks, but the relative contributions of these two stocks has been hotly debated.

2. THE TEUTONIC THEORY.

The Character of the Conquest.—The names of the great historians Kemble, Freeman, Green, and Stubbs will always be associated with the view that the English people derives both blood and institutions from Teutonic sources, and that the invaders colonised the land afresh after exterminating the Celtic inhabitants who did not flee to the mountains of the west. It is allowed that a few women may have been spared to be slaves, but it is insisted that, except in the extreme west, Celtic influence did not survive.

We are directed to the *Commentaries* of Julius Caesar and the *Germania* of Tacitus for a picture of early Anglo-Saxon institutions, and it is maintained that there can be found the origin of the free Anglo-Saxon village community and local self-government. Unfortunately the accounts given by Caesar and Tacitus are by no means clear, nor do they exactly tally. It is possible that the two pictures refer to different tribes and they certainly refer to periods of time about 150 years apart.

Probably the account in the *Germania* holds good as a general description of the institutions brought by the Teutonic invaders to Britain. We cannot, however, maintain that social conditions in Germany remained wholly unchanged for over three hundred years. While no one disputes the view that the ruling classes in Eastern and Central Britain were for the most part of Teutonic origin after the fifth century, later research has made scholars less definite in their views of the exact conditions of society in early Anglo-Saxon England.

The Mark Theory.—The doubtful part of the Teutonic theory is the attempt to interpret the social life of the German village described by Tacitus as being a community of free men who held the village lands in common.¹ The great authority on the "Mark System," as it is called, is the German scholar Von Maurer, who argued from later evidence that originally the villages were independent settlements of free warriors who each elected their own village magistrate or headman, and had their own tun-moot or village meeting to settle the less important matters, even when they became merged with other villages to form a pagus or tribe.

¹ The practice of co-aration, i.e. ploughing under a common system of agriculture, does not necessarily imply the fact of common ownership of the land thus worked.

The Mark theory insists that the villagers owned in common not only the pasture and waste of the mark or settlement but also the arable land, and were emphatically a community of equal freemen. It is admitted that largely by the formation of new settlements the system of private ownership was introduced later, but we are told that when the German tribes took possession of Britain they killed or expelled the previous inhabitants, and colonised the land afresh on the Mark system; that is, a number of German families with their women, children and cattle settled down in self-governing villages of freemen, who both owned as well as tilled the land in common. The later manorial system is explained as the degradation of the original free community by war and oppression.

3. CRITICISM OF THE TEUTONIC THEORY.

The Romano-Celtic Theory.—Scholars have been by no means unanimous in accepting the Teutonic theory. Earlier writers such as Palgrave and Pearson had argued in favour of a considerable survival of Celtic blood and institutions in pre-Norman England. They maintained that it was impossible for the work of four hundred years of Roman civilisation to be wholly nullified by the Saxon invasion, and a more modern writer, Coote, the author of *The Romans of Britain*, argued learnedly, if not convincingly, in favour of the survival of Romano-British cities, especially London.

Stubbs rather hastily disparaged the analogies which Palgrave drew between the social customs of the Welsh and those which are known to have prevailed in pre-Norman England, and insisted that a much closer analogy existed with those of the Ancient Germans. However, the eminent French scholar Fustel de Coulanges has

vigorously challenged Von Maurer's interpretation of Tacitus, and maintains that according to early German law the word "mark" means first a boundary and later a piece of land held as *private* property; that, moreover, in historic times the "mark," so far from meaning a community of freemen, actually denoted a *dependent* settlement formed on the borders of two other settlements.¹

Among English scholars the most important champion of the rival Romano-Celtic theory was the late Frederick Seebohm, who, like Palgrave, was struck by the similarity of early Welsh and early English social customs. He examined carefully all the available evidence, and maintained that the social and agricultural structure of the early English village is best explained as a survival and adaptation of the system prevailing in Britain, as well as elsewhere, under the later Roman Empire. Under this system the land of a village was cultivated by a dependent or semi-servile peasantry, and was legally the property of their lord.

Seebohm held that the relations of the lord with the cultivators of the soil were practically the same as those of a medieval lord of the manor with his serfs, and that the Teutonic invaders did not introduce a system of free settlements nor make a clean sweep of the older inhabitants: they merely stepped into the place of the old proprietors as lords of the dependent villagers and interfered scarcely more than the Romans in the actual customs of the village. Seebohm indeed in his later writings maintains that the Romans in turn only succeeded as lords the Belgic or even earlier conquerors.

¹ See *The Origin of Property in Land*, an English translation of M. de Coulanges' book, published by Sonnenschein. This edition contains a valuable introductory chapter on the English Manor, by Prof. W. J. Ashley

It is all but certain that in some form or other the "manorial" system was to be found in Britain soon after the Teutonic invasion. If it grew up so early among a purely Teutonic community it is difficult to believe that the invaders were accustomed solely to free institutions in Germany, whereas if they mainly consisted of the usual adventurers and youthful war bands, who in Germany were, according to Tacitus, supported by the labours of their leader's dependent cultivators, they would naturally accept the position of lords themselves when the first heat of the conflict was over.

Criticism of the Romano-Celtic Theory.—The advocates of the Teutonic theory adduce two very strong arguments in support of their views—the disappearance of Christianity and of the Celtic and Latin languages in eastern and central Britain. It is doubtful, however, if Christianity ever had many adherents outside the Roman cities of the south-east, and Palgrave maintains that the mixed population of Northumbria under Edwin followed the Celtic religion, on the ground that the name of his priest Coifi was that of the chief of the Druids. We know too little of the state of Britain before the coming of Augustine to dogmatise as to the religion of the lower classes, and even if we cannot trust the Welsh legends which maintain that Bishop Theon was not driven from London or Bishop Thadioc from York until the very eve of Augustine's mission, we can best understand the easy success of both the Roman and the Irish missionaries if we think of them as working among a population who could not be wholly ignorant of a faith from which they or the immediate ancestors of some of them had but recently apostatised.

As to the disappearance of the Celtic and Latin languages, the reply is that Latin was little known outside

the cities, and that the disappearance of the Celtic language in most parts of France in favour of Latin and modern French, the languages of conquering aristocracies, makes the victory of the English language in Britain easy to understand. The fate of Erse in the Ireland of our own days could also be instanced. Moreover, it is possible that the total disappearance of Celtic from popular speech has been taken too much for granted; further research into the local dialects of England may reveal an unsuspected wealth of words of Celtic origin.

Celtic Survivals.—Few scholars now accept the view that the present inhabitants of England are purely the descendants of the Teutonic invaders. The physical aspect of the people, their colouring, and the varying shapes of English skulls point to a free admixture of races. No one doubts that Celtic blood survived to a large extent in the west, not unmixed with that of still earlier races, and Elmet may not have been the only outlying Celtic kingdom in the seventh century. Cenred of Mercia had to fight for his realm with Britons in the eighth century, and legend tells how at this time St. Guthlac in his cell at Croyland mistook an attack by devils for an attack by Britons. Even in the eleventh century, according to the *History of Ramsey*, "British thieves" infested East Anglia.

Neither Theory wholly Admissible.—Probably the true account of the origin of the English of to-day lies between the two theories. Perhaps Seeböhm does not allow for the full effect of the pressure by the Huns in the fourth, fifth and sixth centuries in forcing large bodies of Teutonic settlers to seek fresh homes in the Roman Empire. Britain would be especially favoured by the sea-faring peoples. Professor Vinogradoff, who has carefully investigated the available evidence, concludes that

“the communal organisation of the peasantry is more ancient and more deeply laid than the manorial order. Even the feudal period shows everywhere traces of a peasant class living and working in economically self-dependent communities under the loose authority of a lord, whose claims may proceed from political sources, and affect the semblance of ownership, but do not give rise to the manorial connection between estate and village.” How easy it is to misread the real situation can be seen by comparing the blunder made by English officials in India when in 1793 they elevated the village tax-collector or zemindar into the position of an English squire, and degraded the members of the Indian village community into rent-paying tenants.

The Manorial System.—The manorial system proper assumes that a group of villagers cultivating their lands after a common and traditional fashion owe certain agricultural services to the lands of the lord, whether those lands consist of acre or half-acre strips—“rigs” or “selions,” as they were later called—interspersed among similar strips owned by the peasantry, or situated apart from them in that or even in some neighbouring village. There is nothing in the idea of a dependent village community that is foreign to the customs prevailing among the Teutons, since it is clear from the account in the *Germania* that the leaders of the war-bands supported their followers in time of peace from the produce of such estates. Dependent villages also existed among the Britons, and it is suggested that, long before the civil wars of the Saxons and the Danish raids had broken down the theoretical equality of the free warriors, the ear’y Saxon leaders had in places stepped into the position of lords of the dependent villages formerly held by the beaten Celtic chiefs. One of the commonest of village

names in England is that of Walton. These villages occur for the most part too far from any famous "Wall" to allow us to seek such an explanation of the name; much more probable is it that the word was originally "Wealha-ton"—the village where the "Wealhas" or Britons lived, perhaps as the dependents of a Teutonic lord.

4. SOCIAL CONDITION OF THE ENGLISH INVADERS.— FOLKLAND AND BOCLAND.

Character of the Anglo-Saxon Conquest.—Whether the Teutonic Invasion was the migration of a people, men, women, and children in their ordered ranks of eorls or nobles, ceorls or free warrior-farmers, and theows or slaves, or whether a number of leaders brought over bands of "gesiths" or free companions who found both wives and fortunes in Britain, cannot at this date be definitely decided. Perhaps it would be safe to assume that except for an uncertain margin along the east and south-east coasts of the island England had, generally speaking, by the end of the sixth century come to be a land where a Teutonic aristocracy ruled over a subject race of mixed Celtic and pre-Celtic blood. The country had been conquered piecemeal, but not only had the victors been compelled to buy their success at the price of submission to a king, but they gradually lost their old equality as free warriors during the long wars with the Britons and between the rival bands of raiders.

The King and the Folk.—As each band made good its hold on a district the members settled down as agriculturists, and even where the native tillers of the soil were spared the raiders took a far more active part in the communal life than the Roman lord had been accustomed to do. Doubtless there were cases where purely Teutonic

villages were founded, especially in the early days of the Conquest. In either case the distribution of the spoil would place certain warriors in a more favoured position than their fellows. The chief, now generally called the king, not only received a larger share of the land, but also the right to levy contributions from his subjects in the form of food. The land that fell to the warrior as a member of the "folk" or tribe was called his "folk-land," and he held it subject only to the superiority of the king.

The Thegns or Gesiths.—However, the ceaseless wars soon reduced the numerous "kingdoms" to the seven known as the "Heptarchy." During the process the distance that separated the king from his ordinary subjects increased with the size of his war band of "thegns" or "gesiths" who were winning fresh lands for him. The victor succeeded to the rights of the defeated king, and sent trusty thegns to represent him in the outlying parts of his new dominions, and allowed them to receive as their reward part at least of the tribute due to him as king. Probably the thegn would neither have made his position permanent nor acquired any direct control over the eorls or simple freemen, but for two events—the Conversion of the English and the Raids of the Northmen.

The Local Government.—At first the free eorls settled their quarrels in the local courts that later developed into the courts of the Hundred and the Shire, and perhaps there was an informal village meeting where arrangements were made for carrying on the communal life of the village. However, there is no indication that the eorls or nobles by birth exercised any special authority as such, although it is probable that many of the thegns were originally eorls before the latter class disappeared or was merged in the former.

The Endowment of the Church.—When the kings in

turn adopted Christianity they made themselves responsible for the support of the bishops, monks, and clergy in the usual way in which they were accustomed to reward their officers of state; they made over to them the right to receive a portion of the royal dues from their subjects. A good instance of this method of procedure is to be found in Bede's account of how Ethelwaleh, king of the South Saxons, gave St. Wilfrid the land of eighty-seven families; the meaning obviously is that St. Wilfrid was to receive the dues which those families owed to the king, to maintain his company of monks. As the bishops could not pass on their rights as an inheritance to their successors, and being foreigners had of course no folk land, they induced the kings to give them a charter or "boc" by which they could prove the rights of their church in future against any who disputed them.

Folk Land and Boc Land.—Although such a procedure was novel to Anglo-Saxon ideas, it proved so convenient that the thegns persuaded the king to "book" land to them in the same way. Thus arose the second kind of property in land among the Saxons known as "boc land," which in its first form might be not land at all, but merely rights over other people's "folk land"; for it is evident that the same piece of land could be both "boc land" and "folk land." Boc land could be alienated or left by will to another, but folk land could not. Boc land was only granted to ecclesiastics and great thegns, and grants were made by the king with the formal consent of his Witan. The grantee received immunity from all burdens, except the three military obligations—the so-called *trinoda necessitas*—of military service, the repair of bridges, and the maintenance of fortifications.

Laen Land.—When the owner of boc land infringed the terms of his grant or died without heirs the land reverted

to the king. However, the grantee in his lifetime could dispose of his rights with the king's consent, and the ecclesiastics often made grants of their rights to lay lords for a fixed term—for example, for three lives. The grant thus made was correctly styled a "laen" or loan land, and, when forfeited for any reason, reverted not to the king but to the immediate grantor. However, as such loans were sometimes made by a written document, they came to be called loosely boc land, and were much more common than boc land properly so called. Thus we can trace the beginning of an Anglo-Saxon version of the feudal system at a comparatively early date.

5. INFLUENCE OF THE NORTHMEN.

England Re-organised by Alfred.—Although it is evident from Bede and the laws of Ine (c. 690) that even by the seventh century Anglo-Saxon society was becoming a hierarchy with well-marked grades, the definite depression of the free ceorl—the descendant of the free warrior—to the position of a dependent of a lord was the work of the invasions of the Northmen. The Northmen came first to plunder, then in the ninth century to settle, and in the eleventh century for a brief period they ruled England as conquerors. When in Alfred's time they decided to settle in England they divided up North-east England among themselves, and there are indications in the Chroniclers that the West Saxon kings had drastically to re-cast the institutions of their subjects to enable the struggle to be carried on. Perhaps the tradition that ascribes the origin of so many of the institutions of the English to King Alfred is an echo of this re-organisation. The names of the older institutions were doubtless retained, but the spirit in which they were worked was different. In any

case the influx of landless refugees from the conquered districts could not have been absorbed on equal terms by communities where land was coming to have more and more influence on political status.

Depression of the Ceorls. Commendation.—Alfred saved South-west England from the Danes and Northmen by building a fleet which met the invaders at sea, and by re-organising the “fyrd” or national militia. The details are somewhat obscure, but he apparently placed trusty thegns at the head of the various districts, and every landowner was made responsible in peace or war for those who dwelt on his lands. We have no direct information as to how far the subordination of the free peasantry had extended under the influence of the tribal wars, but it is clear that under the stress of the Northmen’s invasions and the resulting famines men were compelled to “bow their necks for bread,” and that even those who nominally retained their freedom “commended” themselves and sometimes their lands to the protection of a lord, and so bound themselves to assist him against his enemies. Stubbs thinks that commendation may have had a Celtic or Gallic origin; and one is tempted to see in the Northmen’s invasion merely the culmination of a long process by which the free Teutonic peasantry were assimilated in condition to the Celtic and pre-Celtic dependents of their common lords, the thegns of the king. In 890 A.D. we find the laws of Alfred recognising that thegns were able to entail their boc land, i.e. their rights over other men’s folk land, upon their successors. In the tenth-century document known as “Of People’s ranks and laws” the thegn is the most prominent member of society.¹

¹ It may possibly date, in its present form, from the early eleventh century, but it professes to describe earlier customs.

Work of Dunstan.—While the landless man and the simple free man were being depressed as a result of the Northmen's invasion, the king and the great lords were carrying on a struggle for supremacy. In name the king gained great power in the tenth century. Edward the Elder, Athelstan, and Dunstan, who ruled in the name of most of Athelstan's successors, really did try to re-organise the administration of justice and make the traditional courts of the Hundred and the Shire actual courts of justice. However, in practice the central government was weak, and even Dunstan had to make to the great lords concessions which were disastrous when his strong hand was removed. Edgar's "Ordinance of the Hundred" was an interesting attempt to maintain law and order through local courts supervised by the king. It was unsuccessful, largely because royal authority could only be exerted through the great lords against whose oppression and misdeeds the king's action was largely directed.

Failure of Ethelred II.—On Dunstan's death in 988 A.D. Ethelred II. obtained a free hand to display his incompetence. Eight years before the Northmen had renewed their attacks. It must be admitted that their intervention was encouraged by the internal quarrels of the Anglo-Saxons. Ethelred's mother, backed by Dunstan's old enemies, the secular clergy and great lords of the south, had murdered her stepson Edward the Martyr and seized the crown for her own son. Dunstan's party, the regular clergy and yeomen of the Midlands and North, and even Dunstan himself, gave Ethelred a doubtful allegiance, and when, after Dunstan's death, Ethelred tried to exert his authority over the North and Midlands, the Ealdorman of Mercia and others joined the invading Northmen. Ethelred's constant complaints of treachery were probably not

wholly unjustified, but he was thoroughly incompetent—the “Unrede” or Planless one his subjects called him—and he only displaced Dunstar’s friends to put power into the hands of double-dyed traitors such as his low-born son-in-law Eadric Streona. On St. Brice’s Day, 1002 A.D., after vainly attempting to buy peace from the invaders by paying the tribute known as Danegeld, Ethelred ordered a treacherous massacre of all people of Danish blood within reach of his authority. The victims were too often innocent Danish settlers, and some, like Gunhild, sister of Sweyn the Danish king, were actually Christians.

Canute’s Earldoms.—The natural result was that Sweyn harried England until Ethelred fled to Normandy in despair, and he himself was acknowledged king, 1013 A.D. Next year he died, but his son Canute continued the struggle. Ethelred was recalled, but Eadric Streona betrayed him again. On Ethelred’s death in 1016 his son, the gallant Edmund Ironside, forced Canute to share the realm with him. Soon afterwards Edmund also died, by the treachery, it was believed, of Eadric Streona, and Canute acquired the whole kingdom. Canute stained the early part of his reign by cruelties, but on the whole he was a good ruler. He divided England into several great earldoms, and being an able man he kept the earls in submission, and they kept fair order in their districts. Helped by English troops he obtained possession of Norway and Sweden, as well as of Denmark and England, and the inclusion of England in this Northern Empire had lasting effect on the social conditions of the English, for it emphasised the Teutonic character of the nation.

Influence of the Northmen.—We know so little of England’s internal condition at this time that it is easy to minimise the results of the Northmen’s work. From the last quarter of the ninth century North-eastern England

had been largely a "Danish" land. Alfred and his successors had forced the invaders to accept Christianity and make nominal submission, and Dunstan especially had conciliated them so well that probably Byrhtnoth, the English leader at the battle of Maldon against the Northmen in 991, was himself of "Danish" blood. It has been pointed out that the raids of the Northmen had brought about a hierarchical recasting of society and institutions in the south-west, and of course the change would be much more drastic in the Danelagh proper. The Danes easily conformed to Christianity, but it did not soften their manners as it had those of the Anglo-Saxons. We can dimly see the newcomers, as bands of free yeomen farmers, settling down in larger villages than those of the Anglo-Saxons, and the picture that we can piece together of the Danish boroughs shows us a vigorous town life of free men. Perhaps the "law-men" we meet with in the Chronicles and Domesday Book represented the heads of the old war bands. Certainly Domesday tells us that individual freedom was much more common in North-eastern England than in other parts, and probably the unfree members of society in the Danelagh were largely Angle peasantry.

Development of Trade and Industry.—Perhaps the most important contribution of English social history made by the Danes was the development of trade and so town life. In Anglo-Saxon times such industries as there were clustered about the great monasteries. Dunstan attempted to encourage metal work, with doubtful success; and apparently the only town as opposed to overgrown villages in tenth-century England was London. It had been fortified, if not re-founded, by Alfred, and it bravely defended itself against the Danes in Ethelred's reign. How far it received Danes among its probably cosmo-

politan population is uncertain, but from Canute's time many of the leading citizens were Danes and had a church, St. Clement Danes, and district of their own. As early as Ethelred's reign we find "men of the Emperor," merchants of Cologne, settled in London, and undoubtedly the city's trade was largely increased under Canute, especially with Northern lands.

Beginning of Town Life.—The Danes and Northmen generally were indifferently merchants and pirates, and a certain amount of foreign trade was bound to spring up in their coast villages in England. We can safely trace to Danish influence the clause in the tenth-century document "Of People's ranks and laws" already referred to, that a merchant who had fared thrice over the sea by his own means was thenceforth of thegn-right worthy. To the Danes towns were useful not only as centres of trade, but also as fortresses by which they might overawe the more numerous conquered population. The famous "Five Boroughs" of Derby, Leicester, Lincoln, Stamford, and Nottingham formed a confederacy which bridled Mercia in the Danish interest. Even when the West Saxons recovered partial control of the Danelagh these towns remained centres of trade. To Danish influence Norwich and York certainly owed their early trade and property, while Chester and Bristol as ports were the result of trade with the Danish settlements in Ireland.

6. SOCIAL CONDITIONS IN THE ELEVENTH CENTURY.

Aelfric's "Colloquy."—We possess a remarkable picture of life in England during the reign of Ethelred the Unready in the *Colloquy* of Abbot Aelfric. The ploughman, the shepherd, and the ox-herd complain of their heavy toil and the long hours of their labour, which the plough-

man says is the result of his unfree condition. The daily task is at least one acre, and the only assistant allowed is the boy who drives the oxen and has lost his voice by shouting at them. Perhaps the ploughman was a slave rather than a serf, for he had apparently no land of his own to till. The wolves that threatened the sheep and the thieves who attempted to steal the plough-oxen by night are interesting parts of the story.

We also hear of the royal huntsman, the fisherman, and the fowler. The huntsman tells how his hounds drive the wild beasts into his skilfully prepared nets, or at another time help him to run down on foot the hart and the boar, as well as the does and roes and occasionally hares. The spoils go to the king, who in return feeds and clothes the hunter well, and sometimes gives him a bracelet or a horse as a special reward. The terrible Norman Forest Law was not yet known in England.

The huntsman ranked higher than the ploughman, but the fisherman and the fowler seem to have been personally free. The former tells us that he obtained food, clothing, and money by his craft; he possessed a boat with nets, hook, and basket, and after separating the clean from the unclean fish in his catch he used to sell the former in the town, whose inhabitants were eager to buy more than he could supply. Although he sometimes went to sea he preferred river fishing, partly because he disliked the trouble of rowing the distance from his town to the sea. This confession suggests that he was not of Norse descent, and we can be more certain still when we find that he only occasionally went on a whale-hunt, as he was too cowardly to run so great a risk even in company.

The fowler's story is another revelation of Anglo-Saxon sluggishness. He told how he snared birds with nets, nooses, lime and traps, and sometimes by whistling or

with a hawk. He admitted that he never troubled to feed his hawks; in winter they had to feed both themselves and their master; in Lent, when the food they provided was no longer lawful, they were allowed to fly away, and were replaced in the autumn by young hawks which were caught and tamed. The fowler explained that, unlike some people, he would not take the trouble to feed his hawks through the summer as they ate so much; he found it less trouble to catch fresh ones. A similar disinclination for steady effort may be traced in the Anglo-Saxon national character.

The trader or merchant who next tells his story is almost modern by comparison. He maintains that he is necessary to king, ealdormen, wealthy men, and indeed to all people. He exported goods from England to foreign lands in a boat, and imported valuable foreign products which England could not provide, such as cloaks and silk, stones of great price and gold, wonderful garments and perfumes, wine and oil, ivory and brass, copper and tin, sulphur and glass, and similar articles. As his boat was dependent on oars, we can safely assume that the foreign lands were mainly Flanders and Northern France. His exports would be chiefly hides, skins, wool and ores, and perhaps occasionally a little lead and tin. He defends the high prices of his foreign goods on the ground that he has to provide for his wife and children, and he insists on the risks he runs in his calling: from the shipwreck he sometimes suffered he was lucky to save his life.

Aelfric also tells us of the shoemaker who bought hides and fells and from them made not merely leather hose and shoes, but also bottles, bridle-thongs and trappings, and many other articles where leather replaced glass and textiles in olden times. Other craftsmen, such as the various smiths who worked in gold, silver, and copper, and the

carpenter who fashioned articles of wood, are only casually referred to. The dialogue closes with a curious picture of life at a conventual school, where the rod was not spared, but where there was already established the public school tradition that it was wrong for a boy to "give away" his fellows to those in authority.

The King and the Merchants.—We have unfortunately nothing so vivid relating to town life, whether Anglo-Saxon or Danish. We know that from early times the kings protected merchants and that the irregular presents given in return were changed by the king into fixed tolls both at inland and seaport towns, and that the right to receive them was sometimes bestowed by kings on abbeys. We possess an account of the tolls that were levied at Billingsgate in the "Dooms of Ethelred" the Unready. The merchants and their customers had to transact their business before witnesses, as there were no formal receipts given, and it might otherwise be difficult for a buyer to prove his rights.

Frith Guilds and Tithings.—To guard against theft and oppression "Frith" or peace guilds were formed both in town and country. The *Judicia* or regulations of the London Frith guild have come down from the reign of Athelstan, and there was a similar early guild at Cambridge, and somewhat later perhaps at Exeter and elsewhere. In towns the natural organisation of the kindred or family was not always available, and the guilds probably took its place, as they seem to have been more concerned with enforcing due money penalties for manslaughter and personal injuries than for the recovery of property. Whether or not they were originally religious organisations, they certainly in very early days concerned themselves with providing masses for the souls of dead brethren and help for their relatives. The London guildsmen were divided

into groups of ten under a leader, which resemble somewhat the police system of tithings and frith-borhs (frank pledges) which was to be found in parts of England on the eve of the Conquest, if not earlier.

Ceapmann or Cnihten Guilds.—We do not know how far Danish influence had turned the frith guilds of the towns into merchant or *ceapmann* guilds, for the statutes of the London *cnihten guild* which certainly existed in the time of Henry I. have been lost. However, the *cnihten guild* of Canterbury was undoubtedly the same as the *ceapmann guild*, and the customs of Newcastle of Henry I.'s reign show the burgesses organised as a community for trading with non-burgesses. Our ancestors, even in Edgar's time, were not disposed to sell English products on very easy terms, and yet they were careful of their own interests when they bought. By the "Laws of Edward the Confessor," which at any rate represent a tradition, the foreigner was only to sell wholesale, lest by selling retail he might compete with Englishmen. The English townsmen had already secured liberties against royal interference, for they were apparently jealous of the wine-exporters of Rouen and the "Men of the Emperor"—the fore-runners of the Hansa—who had secured special commercial privileges from the kings.

Pre-Conquest Town Government.—Although the germ of self-government in the towns may be traced in the frith guilds and *cnihten guilds*, it is probable that the regulations they framed had to be confirmed by the king or the immediate lord of the district. The port-reeve of London was undoubtedly under royal authority, and there was no self-government in towns at the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, even if they were legally hundreds. We know from Domesday that in the Danish boroughs and perhaps elsewhere control was in the hands of the Lagh-men

(Lawmen), who had *sac* and *soc*, *i.e.* jurisdiction as quasi-feudal lords over dependants. We can trace a similar system in London in early post-Conquest days, for the aldermen of the wards probably represent heads of ancient lordships.

7. FEUDALISM ON THE EVE OF THE CONQUEST.

The Beginnings of Feudalism.—It has already been pointed out that the tribal wars of the Anglo-Saxons, followed by the Northmen's invasions, had necessitated a drastic recasting of English institutions by Alfred and his successors. Perhaps feudalism is not the best description of the result even in the eleventh century, for there was no uniformity in the social system even in theory in the different parts of England. Alfred seems to have made the thegn responsible for the leadership in peace and war of those who were looked upon as his legal dependents. Athelstan outlawed the landless man who had not a lord to answer for him, and Edgar's Ordinance of the Hundred was apparently an attempt to establish a police system for the preservation of the existing social order. When Canute ordered every free man to be in a hundred and in a tithing he was perhaps endeavouring to complete Edgar's task, which the recent disturbances had adversely affected. Perhaps we may say that those men who owned land were responsible only to the king, and that they possessed certain rights over those landless men for whom they provided land or over the small landowners who, once independent, had been forced to commend themselves in troublous times.

When Canute established the great earldoms he took a pronounced step in the direction of feudalism, as these earls or viceroys apparently henceforth came between the king and the landowners who lived in their earldoms.

Perhaps the rights of the lord over his men were less in the Danelagh than in the south and west, for in the Danish districts men could in certain cases "go with their land where they would" and so change their lords. Such a right was of course inconsistent with any real feudal tie.

The Thegn and the Geneat.—An unknown scribe of the eleventh century has given us a contemporary account of the "Rights and Duties" of the various members of society. The thegn or landowner always owes the *trinoda necessitas*: he must serve in the fyrd, repair fortifications, and keep up local bridges. Some estates are also bound to make a deer-hedge on the king's estate, equip a warship, perform military duties on the coast, make payments to the Church and poor, and other things. His under-tenant (the *geneat*) has his duties fixed by the custom of the estate. He is apparently the same as the "dreng" of Northumbria and the "riding-man" of the south. He performs various duties about the estate, makes certain payments such as rent and a grass-swine,¹ helps at harvest time, entertains his lord and goes on errands wherever he is sent.

The Cotsetla.—The *Cotsetla's* (cottar's) duties also vary with the estate. He owes every Monday's work to his lord, and three days a week at harvest time. In return for these services he has at least five acres of land—the minimum for his subsistence. Of course he is a serf, but the hearth-penny which like the free-man he pays on Holy Thursday may be a remembrance of an earlier and more favourable status. He also pays church-scot at Martinmas, and performs service on the coast or at the king's deer-hedge as his lord's deputy.

¹ Probably in return for permission to use the pasture.

The Gebur.—The description of the duties of the *gebur*—the degraded representative of the once free peasant—is a proof of the irregularity of Anglo-Saxon feudalism; in some cases the duties are heavy, in others moderate. He works for the lord at least two days a week, and three days at harvest, and three days weekly from Candlemas to Easter. He is excused other work when his horse is carrying for the lord. At Michaelmas he pays ten rent-pennies and twenty-four at Martinmas, a measure of barley and two hens; at Easter he gives a young sheep or two pennies. He must take his turn in watching at the lord's sheep-fold from Martinmas to Easter. From the beginning of the ploughing season until Martinmas he must plough one acre a week, the lord providing the seed. He ploughs also three acres for nothing, but when he has ploughed two more acres he obtains a certain amount of hay; the lord sometimes allows him to obtain more hay by extra ploughing. He ploughs three acres for his "rent ploughing" and sows them with his own seed, and pays his hearth-penny. Every two geburs feed one deer-hound, and every gebur pays six loaves to the swine-herd of the demesne when he drives the village swine to pasture.

Variation in Amount of Dues.—In return for these rather heavy services it is the custom for the gebur to receive from the lord two oxen, one cow and six sheep, and seven acres of his holding already sown. Henceforth the gebur has to perform the duties required of him, but he receives tools for his work and utensils for his house. His possessions revert to the lord on his death. We are told that the exact customs vary, so that in some cases the gebur pays honey-rent, or food-rent, or ale-rent. It is the steward's duty to keep an exact record of what the customs of the particular estate are.

The Swine-herd and the Bee-keeper.—The swine-herd

and the bee-keeper are generally serfs, sometimes, however, they hold a fair amount of land and possess a horse. The number of swine they must rear for slaughter and the amount of honey they must pay varies with the estate and their holding. Both swine-herd and bee-keeper have to help with ploughing and harvesting and lend their horse when they possess one.

The Slaves.—The male labourer who is a slave receives for food twelve pounds of good corn, as compared with the eight pounds of the female slave. He also gets for winter fare two sheep's carcasses and one good cow for killing, and he has rights of wood according to the custom of the estate. The female slave is only allowed one sheep or three pennies for winter food, but she alone gets the measure of beans for fast-food, with whey in summer or one penny. All the slaves are entitled to a mid-winter (Christmas) feast and an Easter feast, besides an acre for ploughing, a handful of corn daily at harvest time, and their usual dues.

The Farm Servants.—The farm hands who were apparently unfree, such as the sower, ox-herd, cow-herd, shepherd, goat-herd, cheese-maker and barnman, had all special perquisites according to their work. The beadle was not tied down to special tasks, but he was always kept busy and he received a piece of land by virtue of his office. The wood-ward had the right to every tree felled by the wind, and the hay-ward was entitled to have his land next to the meadow: if he did not keep the cattle out of the lord's meadow they would wander from it on to the hay-ward's own crops and so punish him for his careless up-keep of the hedges.

Feasts and Perquisites.—The anonymous scribe ends by repeating that he is only describing the customs of the estate best known to himself, and hinting that customs

vary widely. Then, as though conscious that the services even on the "easy" estate he describes are not very light, he adds that on some estates the people are given various feasts, as at Christmas, Easter and harvest, and receive perquisites on special occasions.

William of Malmesbury's Description of the Anglo-Saxons.—It is difficult to believe that the authority of the lords grew less under Edward the Confessor. William of Malmesbury, who lived in the early twelfth century, has left a dark picture of social life in England on the eve of the Conquest. He tells of ignorant clergy, of monks who took delight in fine clothing and mocked at the rules of their order. A nobility wanton and luxurious gave religion at the most lip-service and did nothing for the commonalty even if they were not actually themselves oppressors. Too often the common people became the prey of the powerful, who seized their property and sold their persons into slavery beyond the seas. The ill-gotten gains were soon squandered in riotous living, especially in drinking, which went on day and night. The result was that they lived in squalid houses which compared ill with the splendid buildings of the more abstemious Normans. We are told that the English wore short garments reaching to the mid-knee; they had their hair cropped, their beards shaven, their arms laden with gold bracelets, and their skin tattooed with various designs.

Growing Power of the Nobility.—Apparently, whatever self-government there had been in the hundred-courts and the shire-courts had now disappeared. These courts were controlled by the great lords in their own interests, and England was quickly passing into the feudal stage when every lord judged his tenants and the tenant knew no authority higher than his lord.

CHAPTER II.

VILLAGE LIFE.

1. INFLUENCE OF THE NORMAN CONQUEST.

Early England a Land of Villages.—In the eleventh century, and indeed for many centuries afterwards, all but a very small section of the people of England lived in villages, and even such towns as existed had much of their life in common with the rest of the country. It is therefore more convenient to deal with the towns in a later chapter, and to look upon England at the time of the Conquest as a land of villages.

Power of pre-Conquest Nobles.—We have seen how from the first coming of the English down to the death of Canute the power of the king had increased, and that the villagers, whether the descendants of free Teutonic warriors or of earlier conquered races, had been compelled by war and famine to accept the over-lordship of the thegns and ealdormen or earls, who in turn rendered a varying allegiance to the king. Strictly speaking neither the manorial system nor the feudal system existed before the Norman Conquest, but only a Norman lawyer was needed to read both into the economic and political conditions of pre-Conquest England.

Position of the King.—For his own convenience Canute had modified the kingdoms of the Heptarchy into a few

great Earldoms or Vice-royalties, but his ability and foresight kept him from sinking into a mere Bretwalda. On his death, however, the weakness of his successors and the ambitions of the great Houses of Godwin and Leofric soon made the English monarchy as powerless as that of France or Germany. Legally the earls never established their rights to the same extent as did the great lords of the Continent, for "the feudal system always contained within itself the seeds of its own decay." Only when the king was weak could the lords be strong; and it was England's good fortune that before the tradition of Continental feudalism had been established in this country there appeared the Norman Conqueror, who had no place for feudalism as a system of government, although he was content to accept it as a system of land tenure.

William I. and the Feudal Nobles.—William the Conqueror did not introduce feudalism into England; rather, because he saw that something unpleasantly like it already existed, did he take all possible precautions against any further development of existing tendencies. Because of his promises when he sought their aid, he was compelled to reward his followers by grants of land, but each grant was made conditional on the performance of military service, which William rigidly exacted; moreover the number of knights to be found by the grantee bore no definite relation to the amount of land received. By accident or design William granted out the land piecemeal, according as the "rebellions" of the English—including help given to Harold—rendered it available. In consequence, the ordinary noble did not receive his land in one mass, but the various estates even of the king's half-brother, Robert of Mortain, were scattered over many counties. The only exceptions were the "Palatine" earldoms—small vice-royalties—but the two important Counts Palatine, the

Bishop of Durham and the Earl of Chester, were kept too busy by the Scots and Welsh respectively to find time to plot treason.

Domesday Book.—From the beginning William assumed that he was the legal owner of all the land in England—a claim never made by pre-Conquest kings, for even Canute was content with asserting supreme authority over the *persons* of his subjects only. From Domesday Book we can gather that those few English who had managed to retain their lands did not suffer any arbitrary alteration of the terms, but the estate was now held from the king and not by folk-right or any non-regal right. William's own grantees, and in course of time all landowners, became legally or actually royal grantees, and had to allow the king to interpret their obligations. A military direction was given to the theory of landholding already springing up in eleventh-century England, and William re-introduced the Danegeld at an increased rate.

The Oath of Salisbury.—Perhaps it is going too far to say that the manor is merely "a house against which geld is charged," and to assume that William made a few lords responsible for the collection of the tax which was to make the king their master ; but it is significant that as soon as Domesday Book had been compiled and the king had a written record of his rights over his greater subjects, he forced all landholders, whether they held directly from him or indirectly from one of his vassals—the tenants-in-chief, to swear allegiance to him against all men at the great meeting on Salisbury Plain in 1086. The pre-Conquest practice of commendation had allowed the great lords to gather armies against the king, but henceforth unsuccessful rebellion against the king meant that the tenants of a rebel would forfeit their lands.

Relations with the Continent.—Although the Conqueror

refused to accept Continental feudalism, he favoured the closest possible relations with the Continent in all other matters. Traders and scholars were welcomed, and Englishmen came into closer touch than before with the Pope and the Catholic Church of the West. Foreign monks settled in the waste places of England, and in the twelfth century the Cistercians colonised the lands which had been devastated by the Normans [*e.g.* Yorkshire].

The Reign of Law.—The greatest blessings that William I. bestowed on England were order and peace. The king's peace had to be kept by all his subjects under severe penalties, and no private war was allowed even on the part of the great nobles. The Forest laws, foreign conquest, and increased Danegeld were not too high a price to pay for this reign of law. William I. kept down the nobles from policy; William II. and his minister Flambard turned the king's feudal rights into an engine of extortion; but Henry I. and his minister Roger of Salisbury understood that that king was strongest whose subjects were happiest, and attempted to create an administration based on the Curia Regis or King's Privy Council of officials in which the feudal nobles as such had no place, and which guaranteed peace to all loyal subjects. It only required the "nineteen long winters" of Stephen's reign to convince the lesser nobles as well as the people generally that no amount of taxation was too great to pay for freedom from baronial oppression, and Henry II. found it easy to improve and extend his grandfather's work. After the Assize of Clarendon in 1166 feudalism could no longer claim to be a system of government; very soon, thanks to practices and legislation such as Scutage, Feudal Aids, and the Assize of Arms, it had come to be merely one—and not the most advantageous—system of land tenure.

William I. and the Church.—It seems at first sight that when William I. set up separate courts for the trial of ecclesiastical cases formerly dealt with in the Witan or other lay courts, he acted contrary to his usual claim to control all authority in England. Actually, however, he never admitted the claims of the Hildebrandine Papacy¹ to any more authority over the Church and people of England than had been allowed to the See of Rome in Anglo-Saxon times. Lanfranc, his Archbishop, served William I. as Dunstan served Edgar, without feeling that he was in any way disloyal to the Church. Not till the Red King broke the bounds of decency did Lanfranc's successor Anselm feel the difficulty of a divided allegiance. He went into virtual exile, and there subscribed to the new doctrine that kings had no right to "invest" the bishop with his ring and staff, as was the custom in England.

King versus Church.—Henry I. secured Anselm's co-operation only by accepting this view; in return the bishop, it was agreed, should do homage as a baron for his lands. However, Anselm had forced even a Norman king to admit that the Church was not wholly under his sway,* and under Stephen both Church and barons usurped further independence. Henry II. easily dealt with the barons, and for a time tricked Thomas à Becket by the Constitutions of Clarendon, 1164, into accepting royal control over the Church. However, Becket's exile and murder deprived Henry of his victory and the Church never forgave the monarchy. Richard's absence from home and John's folly gave her the chance to organise the

¹ Hildebrand was Archdeacon of Rome. He was the adviser of several Popes, and afterwards was Pope himself as Gregory VII. (1073-1085). He maintained that the Pope should rule the Church, free from interference by emperors or kings.

nation against the crown, and at Runnymede on June 15th, 1215, John had to sign Magna Charta. The fact that the Mayor of London was one of the twenty-five barons who were entrusted with the duty of carrying out the Charter is significant of the rise to political importance of a third social class, the burgesses of the new towns, who had more interest in the preservation of order and good government than either the Church or the barons. Henceforth, if the king controlled the barons, the nation controlled the king, and wise kings such as Edward I. began to re-organise the government. The middle classes of the new towns were given a permanent share in the government in 1295, and a new chapter of our social history was begun.

Work of the Norman Lawyers.—It has been said that William I. had no objection to feudalism as a system of land tenure. The manorial system may be termed the economic aspect of feudalism, so far as it concerned the relations of the feudal landholders with those who held land from them *otherwise than by military service*. William I. had insisted upon his own version of feudalism but he was content to let Norman lawyers interpret the "social chaos and cross-relationships" that existed between the lords and their tenants. These lords were now Normans, or at any rate for the most part not Anglo-Saxons, and their lawyers made scant effort to understand the different grades of Anglo-Saxon society. They preferred to reduce them to an intelligible order, and cared nothing if the new system pressed hardly on special cases. Actually the results of their work had an important effect on the social history of the people.

The first result was consolidation. The relations of the villagers with their lord, where one existed, in pre-Conquest days were vague and far from uniform. The Norman lawyers turned the village into a manor with a

single lord, who provided himself with a hall where one was lacking, and insisted that the villagers should attend his manor court because they were his tenants. He carved out for himself a demesne or "home farm," and like his master the king he interpreted his rights to service largely at his pleasure. Free villages almost disappeared, and as the peasantry's services now differed only in amount and not in character, we can assume that the manorial system had been legally established.

Manorial Jurisdiction.—The manorial court naturally came in with the manorial lord. Anglo-Saxon and Danish lords had already obtained control of the local courts, and lords having "sac and soc," that is jurisdiction, over their dependents were not uncommon at the eve of the Conquest. However, it was an axiom of feudal law that every lord should hold a court which must be attended by his tenants, so that he might profit from the fines levied therein. The Norman kings revived the old Anglo-Saxon courts together with the Anglo-Saxon laws, and despite barefaced usurpations in the reign of Stephen the barons had to accept the Assize of Clarendon, 1166, which left them with nothing save their manorial courts and a jingling list of rights varying in number; however, even the lawyers hardly professed to know the meaning of "sac and soc," "tol" and "team," "infangen-theof," "utfangen-theof," and the rest.

Reforms of Edward I.—In 1278 Edward I. issued writs of "Quo Warranto" to discover by what warrant the various franchises or rights were claimed. Eventually he accepted without written charter franchises which the lords could prove to have existed under Richard I., but rights of "pit and gallows," that is of life and death over the king's subjects, were allowed sparingly if at all, and soon the manor court was chiefly concerned with the

agricultural and social life of the villagers. The lord's police jurisdiction shrank before the rising power of the royal justices of the peace, and soon little was left beyond the power to fine the village ale-wife for brewing bad beer.

2. THE MANORIAL SYSTEM BEFORE THE BLACK DEATH.

Definition of a Manor.—It is possible to give a picture of village life in England which holds good in all important details from the eleventh to the middle of the fourteenth century. The whole land was divided up into a number of estates called manors, that is districts which owed to a lord definite services varying rather in amount than in character. A manor was not necessarily coterminous with a vill or village; in the more populous south the land of a vill might belong to more than one manor, while in the north a manor sometimes comprised several vills. Legally the manor was the estate of a single lord. A lord might hold several manors, but the same piece of land could not belong to two manors. The manorial system was concerned with land primarily, and only with persons so far as they had relations, permanent or temporary, with the land.

Serfdom.—Post-conquest lawyers classed together as serfs or villeins both the slave and the varying types of tenant who did manorial services for their land. It is true that influenced by Roman Law they ascribed to the lord the widest power over his serfs. However, although legally the lord owned the chattels and bodies of his serfs and could transfer them where he pleased and otherwise alienate them, yet even in law the serf's life and limb were under the protection of the king, and in practice, although the serf could not leave the manor without his lord's per-

mission, it was rare for him to be sold apart from the estate. Actually the difficulties of the serf's position arose from his unprotectedness rather than from his rightlessness, and both custom and economic developments favoured him.

The Lord of the Manor.—Only a rough parallel is possible between the Norman lord of the manor and the old pre-Conquest thegn who was lord of five hides. As the king was to the tenant-in-chief or immediate grantee of a given piece of land, so was the latter to those to whom he in turn granted land by military service. The immediate lord of a manor was legally the absolute owner against all men except the king of all the land of the manor, and the Norman theory of the manor's daily life was that the estate or demesne—one might say the home farm—should be worked for the lord's benefit, under the direction of the lord's bailiff, by the people who lived within the bounds of the manor. To certain favoured men—at first very few in number and generally "foreigners"—the lord might grant that in return for the use of a piece of land they should pay wholly or chiefly in money. These men were known as "free tenants," and may represent roughly the more numerous class of small freeholders that existed before the Conquest.

The Free Tenants.—Domesday Book furnishes the most convenient picture of village life as it appeared to the Normans. We find that the "free tenants are most common in those Eastern and East Central counties where Danish or Norse influence was strongest. In these districts they form from 27 to 45 per cent. of the population as compared with only 4 per cent. of the whole population of the land." Such favoured tenants were bound only to pay the definite money rent agreed upon, and could sell their holdings and leave the manor. However, while they lived on the manor they were under the

legal jurisdiction (*soke*) of its lord, and hence were called *soke-men* or *soc-men*. Their children were personally free, but often in order to obtain land they had to accept it burdened with personal service on the lord's demesne. Thus they formed one source of the latter class of personally free men holding in villeinage.

The Villeins.—However, we find from Domesday that 38 per cent. of the total population enumerated were villeins, whose land is sharply distinguished from the demesne of the lord. The typical holding of the villein was a *virgate* or *yardland* of about 30 acres. Each villein had a house and yard or toft in the village, and sometimes a croft or enclosure near by. His rent like his holding varied from manor to manor, but not in any given manor. He owed the lord generally three days' work weekly on the demesne—the nature of the work being determined apparently by the lord's bailiff, although custom fixed the days and probably largely the nature of the work. During the harvest season the villein owed special services known as boon-works (*precariae*), and all his family "except the housewife" had to assist. At certain seasons, such as Christmas and Easter, he owed tribute of hens, eggs, various kinds of grain, and occasionally of small sums of money. Usually he found his own food, but on certain well-understood occasions the lord was responsible for a definite food allowance. The villein's duties resembled, but were probably more onerous than, similar arrangements in vogue before the Conquest, and perhaps the additional burdens were the result of a movement by the lords to define their rights as the king by Domesday Book had defined his rights over them. The Conqueror had asked whether any advance could be made in the value of an estate, and the stewards of the various lords would desire to make the manors as profitable as

possible. Theoretically the unfree tenant only held "at the will of the lord," but in practice the tenure was "for life," and personally free tenants took villein holdings either for life or a term of years.

The Cottars.—Next to the villeins the cottars or bordars were the most numerous class of the population, numbering 32 per cent. in Domesday. The cottar held a cottage—hence his name—but seldom held more and often held less than ten acres of land. Naturally his services to the lord were considerably lighter than those of the villein, and he had more time to himself. He hired himself out to a villein or to his lord, and by the help of his employer or of his fellow cottars he tilled his few acres of land; he was too poor to possess a plough or even the pair of oxen generally owned by the villein.

The Slaves.—A third class of the villagers, called by Domesday Book "*servi*," numbered about 25,000, and formed only 9 per cent. of the enumerated population. The word is best translated "slaves," for the *servi* corresponded more to the "theows" of Saxon times than did the villeins and cottars—the serfs properly so called—who were largely the representatives of the "ceorls" or churls. It has been already mentioned that the Norman lawyer saw in the *servus* only a member of the class which rendered manorial services for their lands, and by the twelfth century the *servi* had become indistinguishable from the cottars, for, like the villeins, they were considered as being a part of the lord's estate, just as were the oxen and cattle of the demesne.

Description of a Medieval Village.—A medieval village is best described as theoretically consisting of three concentric "circles." The innermost circle was the village settlement with its houses clustering about the church and the village green. The church was the centre both of

religious and social life; its large nave was commonly used for secular purposes, such as village meetings or as a court of justice, and fairs were held in the churchyard. Generally a stream flowed through or near the village, and often there was a village pond for the watering of horses and cattle. Along the banks of the stream were the meadows where the villagers raised scanty crops of hay as winter food for their stock. This meadow land was so highly prized that it was divided into narrow strips, which were sometimes re-allotted yearly among the villagers.

The Three "Fields"; "Rigs" and "Balks."—The second "circle" comprised the land actually under the plough. Under the more general "three-field system" this land was divided into three large fields. Around each field ran a fence—generally a quickset hedge—to keep out the cattle, and every year one of the three fields was allowed to lie fallow after bearing crops of wheat and barley or oats for the two previous years. The land under the plough was divided into a number of acre or half-acre strips known as "rigs" or "selions," which were separated by "balks" of unploughed turf. The strips were grouped parallel to one another in rectangular blocks known as "sheths" or "flats," of which the direction was determined largely by the shape of the field. If, as was often the case, the demesne lay in the open fields, the lord's holding, like that of the rest of the villagers, merely consisted of so many strips in each of the three fields, of which two only were tilled each year. The third field, mentioned above as lying fallow, was used as additional pasture that year. After harvest the cattle were admitted into the two fields which had been under the plough.

The Pasture or "Waste."—The outermost of the three

“circles” was the pasture or waste. Sometimes it was moorland, but often part at least was wooded, and the village swine grew fat on the acorns and mast that fell from the trees. On the waste each villager had the right to collect wood and fuel for his house and fire, and to turn out a certain number of cattle and sheep according to his holding. These pasture rights were valuable, but the waste, like the arable, was legally the lord’s, and by the Statute of Merton (1235) the lord was allowed to enclose the waste at his will, provided that he left “sufficient” pasture for his free tenants. Although the unfree tenants were apparently without legal protection in this case, the protection given to the free tenants, insufficient though it was in practice, suggests that the lord’s claim was as recent in origin as it was considered unjust.

The Lord’s View of His Position.—Domesday Book divided the land of a manor into the lord’s demesne and the land of the villeins. The lord’s theory was that he allowed a certain number of villein families to cultivate portions of his land in return for their work on the rest for his advantage. The lawyers told him that without his good will his villeins possessed nothing, and his legal position as against his serfs is best compared with that of an American slave-owner of the better class, who never attempted to sell his slaves apart from the land.

The Village Officials.—The villeins saw their position from a different standpoint, and their view, for reasons that will be mentioned later, ultimately prevailed. They felt that they were a village community with common interests in the successful carrying on of cooperative agriculture. In practice, when they had performed their weekly work and paid their other dues, their time was their own. They elected their own foreman—the reeve—under whose guidance they decided on and carried out the

various operations. There was often a village "messor" or head of the reapers; while the village shepherd, swineherd, smith or other communal official, where such existed, was, like the reeve and the messor, free from actual field service. Part of the official's reward was the produce of certain strips in the field which his fellows tilled for him. Another important officer was the "pinder," who placed all straying animals in the village pound or pinfold, out of which they could be redeemed only when their owner paid a fine. There was also a village miller, and one or two brewers or ale-wives—for our modern hot drinks such as tea, coffee, or cocoa were of course unknown—and a village baker managed the common oven. It is true that the miller and the baker paid a sort of license or rent to the lord and did not possess the best of characters for honesty among the peasants who were forced to submit to their monopoly, for no man might use a hand-mill or bake his own bread.

The Manor Court.—However, there was always a remedy against them and their fellow offender, the brewer, at the lord's manor court. Here the lord's steward or bailiff presided, but offenders were presented by the reeve and four men, all elected by the villagers, and the villagers—the suitors¹ of the court—decided as judges upon the guilt or innocence of the offenders. Other sins of village life, such as ploughing up the balks and similar forms of unneighbourliness, were punished by fines, and even the lord himself could be penalised for not fulfilling his village duties. As the lord himself obtained the fines he had no interest in curbing the jurisdiction of the "court leet," as the manorial court was sometimes called. Not

¹ "Suitor" here means any person who is bound by his tenure to pay "suit of court," i.e. to be present and take part as juror (really they were judges rather than jurors in the modern sense).

till the Black Death had thrown the manorial system out of gear did local government break down in England. Probably the later Vestry system is only a modification in an oligarchical direction of the older village self-government to meet the cases of villagers not owing suit to the local manorial court. Edward I. and succeeding kings had cut short the police jurisdiction of the lords by the institution of Conservators and Justices of the Peace, but as loyal subjects the villagers were left to manage their own local matters.

3. THE DECAY OF THE MANORIAL SYSTEM.

Decay of the Manorial System.—The manorial system being the economic counterpart of feudalism naturally tended to disintegration according as society in England passed out of the peculiar and temporary stage which made feudalism possible. It may be said here that actually the practice did not for long correspond to the legal theory of the manorial system. England after the Conquest was never entirely a land of small villages or manors—the state of society which alone could guarantee any permanence to the manorial system—and the disturbing elements such as the Crusades, the incessant wars, and the growth of commerce, and so of chartered towns, grew stronger as time went on. A static condition of society is not possible for long, and almost as soon as it had received legal form from the Norman lawyer the manorial system began to pass away with the passing of the condition of society which alone made it possible.

Commutation of Services.—Under the early manorial system “natural economy” prevailed; that is, rent was paid in services or in kind, money was seldom used, and each manor was self-contained and self-supporting alike

in plenty and in dearth. However, when the king began to impose taxation such as Danegeld, carucage and scutage, the manorial lords had to find money, and began to look upon their demesne lands as economic property. Probably the Church, especially the monasteries, was the first to follow the example of Henry I.'s minister, Roger of Salisbury, in organising a sort of private exchequer, and the manor began to be reorganised on the lines that would pay best. From an early date there began a steady process of commuting for money the labour services due from the villeins to the demesne, and later still, but more especially after the Black Death, the demesne itself was alienated at some approach to an economic rent.

Its Real Nature.—The commutation of services is often misunderstood. The latest researches have proved that commutation took place at the will of the lord and for his advantage. He could refuse to commute any of or all the services in any one year, and apparently the holders of villein land could be held strictly to their bargain at his will. Thirteenth-century writers such as Walter of Henley and Bishop Grosseteste assume that the lord is working the manor on purely economic lines, and the former points out that "customary servants neglect their work and it is necessary to guard against their fraud." Forced labour does not pay in any age, and natural causes aided the process of commutation.

The Economic Reserve.—Although all the family of the peasant were in theory the lord's serfs, duties were attached to the particular holding and not to individuals, except at harvest time. It is probable that each villein holding was the home of a family group, whose members worked the land and performed the services as a common duty. When there were many males in a family some of them would either sink into the ranks of the cottars or

remain wholly landless labourers. Such would form an economic reserve who could be hired by the lord to work the demesne lands at less wages than the commutation money paid by those owing personal service. Our written evidence practically begins in the thirteenth century, and then village society has become more complex and *personal* freedom is strangely common.

Emancipation of the Serfs.—When the lord began to desire money he obtained it not only by selling labour service but also by selling the labourer his freedom, or perhaps earlier still by the half-way process of selling him the right to leave the village. Legally, indeed, the serf's gains belonged to his lord, but in practice the serf, like the Roman slave, was allowed a certain amount of private property with which he could buy his freedom through an intermediary, and he could on certain conditions make a will. The son of the serf saw the son of the free tenant able to leave the village and seek his fortune elsewhere, while he himself could not be ordained or even receive education against the lord's will. However, he knew by report that if he could hide in one of the new corporate towns for a year and a day his master could not reclaim him as a serf. Doubtless as a result the population of the chartered towns received a steady infiltration of the boldest peasantry, and this aided their development.

As taxation increased, and especially as the Crusades and the various wars made money necessary to the lord, he met the wishes of his serfs. For a small sum, called *chevagium* or head-money, the young serf obtained a license to migrate in search of fortune to another village or a chartered town, and often in course of time he saved enough money to buy from his lord a formal charter of freedom. Other serfs earned charters in their native

villages or were freed for faithful service or as a pious duty by their lord on his death-bed. However, outward changes in village life were slow. Just as the commuted services were noted on the manorial roll, though perhaps seldom performed, so the free man, whether an emancipated serf or the son of a free tenant, could only obtain a villein holding by agreeing formally to do villein services if required. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries new holdings were undoubtedly formed from the waste, but they were mainly villein holdings, and thus we get the phenomenon of free men holding by servile tenure, which medieval lawyers tried to explain by inventing the terms "villein-en-gros" and "villein-regardant."

Commutation of Services.—The older writers, perhaps in a praiseworthy zeal to establish English freedom at as early a date as possible, rather misinterpreted the evidence as to the extent as well as the nature of commutation of services. It certainly began in England earlier than elsewhere, but the surviving manorial records for the first half of the fourteenth century prove it was by no means universal on the eve of the Black Death. Mr. Page in *The End of Villeinage in England* has analysed the evidence supplied by the records of eighty-one manors in twenty counties for the year 1350. He found that in only six manors had all labour service been commuted, as opposed to forty-four where the villeins still performed their services. In the remaining thirty-one manors some slight labour service was performed in nine cases and about half the labour service due was performed in the other twenty-two manors.

Its Real Nature.—Apparently it had become the custom as early as the thirteenth century to attach a money value to certain kinds of labour services on the manorial account rolls. If the peasant did not perform the services

due or only did part of them, it was now comparatively easy to assess the lord's loss in the manor court. Both the lord's need for labour and the supply available for purchase varied from time to time. Perhaps favoured tenants or even favoured villages may have effected a more or less permanent commutation of services, but, taken as a whole, the records are against the view that before the Black Death the villeins generally had established the right to commute their services even against the will of their lord, although they had perhaps established in practice their right to retain their holdings if they were personally free, and if they discharged the customary services and obligations.

Position of the Personally Unfree.—The villein who was not personally free—the *nativus*, *neif*, or *rusticus*—technically held his land only “at the will of the lord” and not for life or for a term of years, as in the case of a free man. In some parts of England at any rate it was the custom for the youngest son—probably because he remained longest with his father—to take over the holding on his father's death. He had to pay a fine on entrance called a *gressom*, and the lord had the right to take as *heriot* the best beast of the dead man. If the villein's daughter married, her father had to pay *merchet* as recompense for the loss of her services, for the “housewife” did not help the lord at harvest-time. The children of a female *neif* were only free if she married a free man who bought her freedom. If a female *neif* was convicted of unchastity she or her father had to pay a fine called *leyr-wite*. The villein's widow had certain rights in the holding, and his children according to varying rules could succeed their father on the same terms. Only when the family died out or a very distant relation succeeded could the lord alter the terms.

Decay of the Manorial System.—By the middle of the fourteenth century the outward uniformity of the manorial system had become in practice considerably varied. Money economy was steadily taking the place of natural economy, for the peasant had begun to drift to the towns and it was unlikely that the old village life in its unpleasantest aspects should not be resented. Moreover the constant wars against France and Scotland were fought mainly with mercenaries after Henry III.'s time, and most villages contributed to the new armies. The bolder serfs either joined the armies or fled to the towns, and even in the villages the free men who held by villein tenure were as eager to commute their services as the serfs were to escape. Only the amount of "free" labour available enabled the lord to work his demesne in many places. Probably labour services and servile dues generally would have gradually died out with the increasing use of money and the growth of industry, but in 1348 the Black Death reached England, and the vast mortality that ensued destroyed that reserve of labour which alone had made the manorial system even nominally possible.

4. THE BLACK DEATH AND ITS RESULTS.

Origin and Nature.—The Black Death was the first of the six great medieval pestilences, and probably originated in China about 1333. It travelled to Europe upon the caravan routes and had reached England at Weymouth on August 1st, 1348. Its arrival was everywhere heralded by stories of horrors, and those attacked by it were weakened by their fears. The purple patches on their skin made its victims loathsome enough, but the plague was accompanied by earthquakes and atmospheric disturbances, and men told how it steadily moved on from the stricken East

as a dark and fetid mist. There are no trustworthy statistics as to the mortality it caused, but probably at least half the population of England perished.

Insanitary Habits.—There had been earlier pestilences, and indeed in some form or other the plague was chronic in the towns. The Friars, especially the Franciscans, had made the combating of disease one of their chief works and in a few towns had installed some sort of pure water-supply, but in the villages the same brook or well which furnished the water for drinking was used for washing clothes and similar purposes, and in wet weather received the drainage of the mixen or refuse-heap that stood by each house-door. Sanitation was of the crudest kind and personal cleanliness was not a special study. Skin diseases, known generally as leprosy, were common, and indeed inevitable in view of the winter diet of salted fish and salted meat, especially as the salt obtained by evaporating sea-water was not pure and the use of vegetables was rare.

Effects of the Black Death.—The effects of the Black Death are best looked at first in their immediate and then in their permanent aspect. It is perhaps safer to say that the pestilence brought matters to a head than to maintain that it actually caused the ruin of the manorial system. We have already seen how that system was disintegrating slowly but surely under the pressure of economic forces, and the Black Death occurred just at the time when the growth of commerce and the plunder gained from the French wars had increased the store of money in England. Cattle as well as men suffered during the years 1348 and 1349, and as the supply of money was not affected the value of the surviving cattle and men would be increased. The peculiar character of medieval agriculture made the loss of men and cattle of special importance.

Cooperative Agriculture.—In any age such a disaster

would cause a temporary financial panic, and there would be a decrease in the amount of food produced. The crisis in 1349 and succeeding years' was the more acute because medieval agriculture was cooperative. The heavy wooden plough-share, only shod with iron, required eight oxen to work it even if, as is suggested, only four oxen drew it at the same time. Each villein farmer supplied two oxen and the strips were of necessity cultivated in turn by groups of four men. When two of the partners and perhaps half the oxen were dead, the task of making up fresh partnerships and fresh plough-teams was difficult; hence the produce, and therefore each peasant's income, decreased, while his liabilities to his lord remained legally the same. Food thus became dearer, especially as the plague recurred at intervals.

Immediate Results.—The immediate result was that the wages of free labour rose at once fifty per cent., and the indispensable reapers demanded and obtained fivepence and sixpence a day instead of the former twopence or threepence. An old chronicler laments that they did less work than before and did it less well. The high wages earned by the free labourers made their lot seem preferable to that of the peasant farmer, especially when the latter, barely able to work his own holding, was reminded by the lord that former commutations of labour service had been by favour and that the lord had the option of demanding actual service or an increase in the amount of the commutation money. Legally the lords were within their rights, but the tenant could only yield at the risk of his own economic ruin.

Demands of the Lords.—It must once more be repeated that definite and final commutation of services had not taken place on many manors by 1348, but that occasional and partial commutation *for the lord's convenience* was

fairly common. In this latter class of manors the lords only allowed commutation at considerably enhanced rates after the Black Death. Attempts were made to make one villein responsible for two holdings, or in some cases to insist that the survivors of the community should work all the holdings of the village. In practice the lord had to abate the rents somewhat in money and service, but after a more or less charitable forbearance in the earlier years the lords carefully safeguarded their rights in new leases. The duration of the new tenancy was fixed as "at the lord's will," or "until another tenant shall offer the accustomed services."

Flight of the Peasants.—The villager who was personally free could give up his holding and either obtain another elsewhere on better terms or become a free labourer, but the personally unfree tenant had no alternative but flight if the lord insisted on actual service. Formerly he had had little incentive to flight, for he could generally buy permission to leave, and his prospects in another village were not very tempting. Now flight meant both freedom and better conditions, for lords everywhere were competing for free labour and asked no questions, and the new weaving industry could absorb many workers, while the chance of being recaptured by the old lord was small. Migration on a large scale took place, and the lords found themselves burdened by the holdings of the exiles as well as by those of the victims of the pestilence. If a new tenant appeared there was no guarantee that he would stay. Some lords were more fortunate than others, either because the plague had taken a lighter toll or because they had offered better terms to their men, but the manorial system steadily decayed so far as labour service went.

The Statutes of Labourers.—Two other immediate re-

sults of the Black Death were the Statutes of Labourers and the Peasants' Revolt. Even before the Black Death, owing to war and pestilence, the wages of hired labour had steadily risen until the commutation money did not equal the cost of the hired labour that took the place of the old services. ' By June 1349 the increased demands of the free labourers had caused Edward III. to issue the Ordinance of Labourers, which, after inveighing against the greed and idleness of servants who had taken advantage of the crisis, ordered all able-bodied men and women, not otherwise provided for, to accept employment at the old rates and perform their contract of service. It was forbidden to give alms to the able-bodied. Dealers in provisions were to charge reasonable prices and be content with moderate gains. When Parliament met it passed the Statute of Labourers, in February 1351, which fixed the actual wages, and, using the precedent of the appointment of Royal Aulnagers to control the cloth trade, it created special Justices of Labourers to administer the new Act. Offenders were to be placed in the stocks.

The Statute of Labourers was a failure, despite the severity of the Justices, because employers helped their servants to defeat it, and gradually the higher rate of wages was tacitly conceded. The concession was received without gratitude and the new Justices had only embittered the social problem by severity. It is difficult to justify this labour legislation despite the extreme demands of the peasants, for it only fixed a *maximum* and not a *minimum* wage; moreover, almost at once the king—even if his motives were good—complicated the situation by debasing the coinage. It may be maintained that by allowing the Justices to fix wages the Act freed the peasant from complete dependence on his master, but actually the lord could depress wages and even recover

his villein from another master, despite any contract. The most reactionary effect of the Act, despite its plausibility, was that it chained even free men to the soil of their native village. It was impossible that such an Act should be obeyed.

The Peasants' Revolt.—The administration of the Statute of Labourers in the face of sullen opposition was probably the main cause of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381—the first great struggle between Capital and Labour in England. The story has been immortalised by William Morris in "A Dream of John Ball" and has been recently investigated anew by brilliant French and English scholars. Professor Thorold Rogers traced the cause to an attempt by the lords to re-enforce previously commuted and obsolete labour services, but the matter is by no means so simple, nor were labour services generally obsolete, as has been explained above. The revolt was really a rising of the workers against their employers, for tradesmen, artisans, the lower clergy, and free labourers were as important elements in it as the villeins, and Kent, "where there was no villeinage," was one of the foremost counties in the rising.

Its Real Causes.—The movement had also a political side, for some of the county gentlemen joined it in their dislike of the foreign and domestic policy of Richard II.'s ministers, headed by John of Gaunt. The wars with Scotland and France were alike unsuccessful and England had been invaded by both enemies. The Government was bankrupt, and in consequence, when the peasants were smarting under the control of the Justices of Labourers, they were called upon to pay a series of Poll Taxes. In 1377 and 1379 the tax was graduated, and the poorest only paid a groat, or fourpence, but in 1381 every person over 15 years of age had to pay three groats. The rich were

ordered to help the poor to pay the tax, but in some villages there were no rich. As might be expected in the absence of any proper system of registration, false returns as to the number of taxable inmates were made by householders, and the attempted evasion was so flagrant that even when more accurate returns were insisted upon at least one third of those who had paid in 1377 escaped in 1381. To make things worse, the tax had been farmed out to foreigners and the Government issued a special commission to punish offenders.

The Secret Societies.—The story of Wat Tyler, who is said to have killed a collector to avenge an insult to his daughter, is doubtless apocryphal, but we have evidence that under leaders such as Jack Strew in Essex and John Ball, the “mad priest” of Kent, the disaffected elements had organised a series of secret societies. Probably the Friars, rather than Wyclif’s “Poor Priests,” were the missionaries of the movement, for the rebels were not heretics, although their leaders were doubtless influenced by the Reformer’s teaching, which they applied as condemning the riches of temporal lords as well as those of the ecclesiastics attacked by him. Many of the insurgents could remember the terrible *Jacquerie* or French Peasant Revolt of 1358, and Ball’s text “When Adam delved and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?” was ominous. The Abbays of St. Albans and Bury, the governing classes of towns such as Scarborough, and the authorities of Cambridge University were attacked equally with the lawyers and manorial lords.

The Peasants’ Demands.—In the towns the rising was more or less the blind anger of the oppressed finding a vent, but in the villages the movement was rather a social revolution. The peasants demanded that they should be held henceforth as free men and be no longer serfs, and

they demanded that they should pay fourpence per acre for their land in lieu of services. So many of their number had already obtained freedom in various ways that the rest in the disorder of the time hoped to cast off the chains of a servitude they were just beginning to realise. They no longer were afraid to leave their native village for an unknown future.

Result of the Rising.—The details of the rising and the way in which the king and his advisers tricked the peasants at Smithfield and Mile End are well-known incidents of general history and need not be recapitulated here. Whether a momentary feeling of noble pity for the peasants moved the strange mind of the young king to promise charters of freedom, or whether, as in later years, he was merely dissimulating to gain time, is unknown, but the peasants soon found their charters worthless, their leaders hanged, and themselves forced back into servitude. But the revolt was only outwardly and momentarily a failure. In a few cases the lords capitulated and withdrew the demand for services; in other cases the passive resistance of the peasant sometimes developed into secret societies and strikes. The lord's right to demand services was never formally repealed by law, nor was serfdom as a status legally abolished. However, services tended to become less and less exacted, although in certain forms they lingered on till the seventeenth century.

Disappearance of Serfdom.—The personally unfree villeins—the serfs proper—became very few during the fifteenth century, for not only was it difficult to prove villeinage in the absence of villein services, but also those serfs who obtained permission to reside away from the manor were able to secure the practical freedom of their children by concealing their existence, or at any rate their names. By the sixteenth century few knew that

there were any bondmen in England, although we find occasional cases where the wealthier ones were mercilessly tallaged by their lords, and in 1575 Queen Elizabeth listened to the prayer of almost the last serfs in England—a few families on the lands of the Palatinate of Lancaster—and granted them manumission. However, as late as 1617 there were three persons who were legal serfs on the manor of Falmer in Sussex.

After the apparent failure of the Peasants' Revolt the more permanent effects of the Black Death and the social revolution precipitated by it began to appear. These changes can be briefly grouped under the heads of alienation of the demesne and the growth of enclosures.

Permanent Results.—The alienation of the demesne to tenants who paid a money rent for it was not unknown in earlier days, but when the refusal of services and the high price of labour made bailiff-farming unprofitable the lords began to let out portions of the demesne to their tenants at a money rent. Sometimes the whole manor, demesne, villein lands, woods and pastures were leased either to a few men or to a committee of villagers acting on behalf of the community, and often, in the absence of competition, the rent obtained was very low.

The Stock and Land Lease.—Rather more favourable to the lord was the extension of another early custom—the stock and land lease. In theory the lord had always stocked the land of his serfs, but now the practice was extended to free tenants who were too poor to stock a holding themselves, and who undertook to return the equivalent of the lord's bounty when their term of years expired, if the lease was not renewed. The land thus leased might be empty villein holdings or part of the demesne, but in any case rents were low. Thus there came into existence a race of yeomen farmers; the old

villeins gradually developed into copyholders whose rents and fines became nominal as prices rose, while the leaseholders were almost as well off, and for many years nearly as secure in their tenure so long as they were willing to pay fines for their land at intervals. In some cases the yeomen obtained the freehold of their property, but it is only too certain that arable land steadily went out of cultivation.

Enclosures for Sheep-farming.—However, the most significant movement of the time was the steady increase of enclosures for sheep-farming as the demand for wool grew. The lords had always a tendency to encroach on the waste with their sheep, and after 1381 especially they showed less regard for their tenants' rights than ever. Tired of the struggle with refractory tenants they turned the arable lands as well as the waste into pastures for sheep, and found that it paid. In some cases few tenants were left by the Plague and probably some could find employment as shepherds or as spinners and weavers, but there were other cases where the peasantry were deliberately displaced by the lord in circumstances that caused great hardship and suffering. The victims could not all be absorbed, despite the growth of industrial life, and the modern problem of unemployment took its rise.

"Sturdy Beggars."—The bolder peasants joined the army when war was on and became in time of peace retainers of the great lords. Others were the forerunners of the dangerous "sturdy and valiant beggars" who were from time to time treated with such ferocity, especially under the Tudors. Others again, the women and children and weaker men, too many even for monkish or lay charity to relieve, doubtless tramped on till they died by the wayside. Under the manorial system every person was assured of some sort of life in his village community,

but it was not till Henry VIII.'s reign that the law guaranteed the barest sustenance to the impotent poor.

"The Golden Age of the English Peasantry."—Professor Thorold Rogers termed the fifteenth century "the Golden Age of the English Peasantry," but later research has cast some doubt on his glowing conclusions, although perhaps the rival view of Mr. Denton is too gloomy. Recovery from the effect of the Black Death was necessarily slow, especially as there was no possibility of increase of population by immigration, and legislation was directed towards the restoration or maintenance of the impossible old conditions, rather than to conscious reorganisation of society to face the new problems. The fifteenth century was a time of startling contrasts in social conditions. Professor Rogers can quote instances of high wages paid to labourers, but Mr. Denton can bring evidence that the life of the lower classes was too often one of squalor and misery. It is doubtful if the high wages were for *regular* work, and the picture of the time painted by the *Paston Letters* or the somewhat earlier *Vision of Piers Plowman* makes one hesitate to accept wholly the more roseate hues.

Partial Prosperity.—Undoubtedly some sections of society prospered during this period. Sheep-farmers certainly did, and we can also trace the rise of a class of arable farmers who tilled more acres than the old villein, possibly however under a system of extensive cultivation in the face of dear labour. English weavers also prospered, and we can find the beginnings of English foreign trade. The new native manufacturers and merchants spent their wealth in building houses, churches, and guildhalls, and thus the taste for extravagant architecture enriched one class of labour, just as the taste for expensive forms of dress helped on the weavers and spinners.

Decay of Medievalism.—However, the old order of society steadily decayed, and the new order came only slowly to birth in the welter of war and internal disorder. The second part of the Hundred Years' War temporarily absorbed the more unruly elements of the population, but scarcely had its disastrous ending returned the troops to England than the Wars of the Roses broke out, with the beaten troops as retainers of the warring factions. Parliament had weakened the king until he was powerless to defend either himself or his peaceful subjects. No authority but that of the sword was respected by the Nevilles or their rivals, and the Church, which had overthrown the Lollards only by submitting to the king, was helpless before the great nobles and could find no protector in the Papacy. During the long night of the fifteenth century men learnt that their lives and possessions were secure only under a ruler strong enough to secure order. The old nobility obligingly committed suicide during the Wars of the Roses. Edward IV. before his death had accounted for most of the Nevilles and thereby won the favour of the rising middle classes. Richard III. wiped out the Woodvilles, who might have succeeded the Nevilles, and when he in turn fell at Bosworth in 1485 Henry Tudor was free to lay the foundations of the new society. The king was to rule through a subservient Parliament by favour of the new landed gentry and the commercial middle classes. The peasantry and workmen had to be content with the prospect of improving their lot if chance and their own abilities allowed them.

CHAPTER III.

TOWN LIFE.

1. ORIGIN OF ENGLISH TOWNS.

Roman Sites utilised.—With the possible exception of London, which may have been an early trading mart, the earliest towns in England were those founded by the Romans. Although the names of about thirty of these Roman towns are known, only one—Exeter—continued to exist during the fifth and sixth centuries ; even York and London seem to have been deserted, at any rate for a time. However, when the Anglo-Saxons were becoming Christians, the Bishops often settled on the sites of old Roman towns such as Canterbury, London, and Winchester, perhaps because these were the “capitals” of the local kings, who had already begun to find the Roman Walls useful as fortifications, or because of the strategical value of the position for missionary work.

Sites chosen for their “Geography.”—However, other towns such as Oxford or Bristol owed their origin to their geographical position : at the former was a convenient ford for cattle, at the latter was the possibility of spanning the Avon by a bridge where the river was yet deep enough to accommodate the trader’s vessel. Sometimes, as at Grimsby and Yarmouth, a group of fishermen’s huts developed into a town, while other towns sprang up at the

intersection of roads, as Aylesbury, or where a main road reached the sea, as Dover and the Cinque Ports.

Monastery and Castle Towns.—A third group of towns has a more artificial origin; they often represent the group of squalid huts that clustered round some castle or monastery of which their inhabitants were originally serfs. The towns of Bury St. Edmund's and St. Albans prospered by catering for the pilgrims who visited the shrines of these saints, and their history during the Middle Ages is one long struggle to free themselves from the control of their local abbot. Newcastle-on-Tyne is an interesting example of a Roman site which lay waste until the Norman kings saw the value of its unique position as warder of the essential Tyne Bridge. The Norman *motte and bailey* castle was succeeded by the stone keep of the first Angevin king, and the Scottish policy of Edward I. secured the position of the town as the staple of the North, just as his Welsh policy led to the rise of towns about his Welsh castles.

The "Garrison" Towns.—A fourth class of towns consists of those English boroughs which were definitely founded or re-founded as rallying-places for the inhabitants of the various counties during the struggle with the Danes; they did not come into existence solely as convenient centres for trade, nor did they in all cases owe their choice to a natural defensive situation. Alfred, Edward the Elder, and his sister Ethelfleda of Mercia deliberately made artificial mounds in convenient places, especially in the Midlands, and fortified them, although perhaps later commercial towns sprang up around these rude fortresses, as happened also in the case of the rival "Five Boroughs" of the Danes. The problem of these 'garrison towns,' as they may be called, presents many difficulties, but the evidence from Domesday onwards

leads us to infer that it was the duty of the landowners of the district to keep the walls and fortifications of the borough in repair and to maintain a number of houses in the town, wherein theoretically at least a garrison furnished proportionately by the outlying manors should be sheltered. The known facts do not quite square with the theory, but it is possible that in practice people from outlying manors could acquire houses in the borough for convenience of trade. The character of the inhabitants of such towns was certainly modified by the appearance of Danish traders, especially after Canute became king, and, as has been already said, many of the English towns, especially Norwich, York, Chester and Bristol, owed their prosperity to the foreign trade introduced by the Danes, just as the Flemish and Norman merchants developed London and the ports of the south-east coast.

Real Nature of early English Towns.—However, we must remember that till long after the Norman Conquest most English towns were but overgrown villages, each with its arable fields and pasture lands. A large proportion of the inhabitants depended directly on agriculture for their living, and even as late as the sixteenth century in prosperous Norwich the weavers were impressed into reaping the harvest. In medieval England the town artisans served mainly if not wholly the wants of the agriculturists of their immediate neighbourhood, and even the export of cloth on a large scale began only in the fifteenth century. The burgesses themselves were at first of small account in the eyes of the king and the lords. A few of the larger "boroughs" had a burgess court and perhaps the right to be treated as hundreds, but many of the smaller "boroughs" were subject to the manor court of their immediate lord, who was not always the king. Even the king's boroughs were ruled by a port-reeve

responsible to the sheriff, who merely saw in the burgesses fruitful sources of taxation.

2. MERCHANT GUILDS AND TOWN CHARTERS.

Early Town Government.—Legally, the townspeople were manorial tenants, and unless they could make a special bargain with their lord they were bound to perform the usual services on the demesne and to pay suit to his manorial court. Moreover, they might not possess hand-mills, but must grind their corn at the lord's mill and pay toll. Such villas as were formally recognised as boroughs for some special reason had, according to Edgar's law, an independent court known as a borough-moot with at least three sessions a year, and in the tenth century one or more mints. At Lincoln, Stamford, and Cambridge we can perhaps see in the Law-men traces of another system of government. Perhaps these Danish officials acted as legal assessors to the borough court; they recall in some ways the aldermen of early London and the *scabini* or "echevins" of the Continental towns, and may be relics of an original local self-government.

Royal Towns.—A vill might be on the land of the king or of a baron or of the Church. The king's villas had the easiest path to freedom and self-government, because their special enemy, the sheriff, was also as a rule suspected by the king. The latter had neither the time nor the inclination to interfere needlessly and his constant want of money made him willing to sell privileges. At first the townspeople were content to buy freedom from vexatious duties such as attendance at the local court, work in the fields, and the obligation to use the lord's mill, and the leading men of the vill, probably already united in a frith-guild or a religious guild, were always eager to obtain fresh concessions from the king.

Baronial Towns.—The baronial vills were not so successful in obtaining freedom, for their masters found time to devote to the profitable exaction of dues. However, such control was fatal to real prosperity, and, luckily for the towns, the Crusades and the constant wars caused the barons to be willing to sell their rights for money. The ecclesiastical lords were as a rule more obdurate still, but in the thirteenth century the process of selling vexatious rights began. Even in the fifteenth century the men of St. Albans after many struggles had to accept the full authority of the abbot, and the city of Salisbury that of their bishop, but from early days the subordination of the towns to their lords tended to differ more and more in degree if not in kind from that of the villages. When a vill offered facilities for a "market" either for the local population or strangers and could buy the protection or forbearance of its over-lord, it generally managed to obtain a greater degree of self-government as time went on. The outward signs of a "free borough" seem to have been the possession of a borough court and free burgage tenure¹ instead of liability to villein services and incidents such as "*merchet*," but the exact liberties and the dates at which they were achieved varied from town to town.

The Merchant Guild.—The townspeople sought freedom from the arbitrary exactions of the sheriff or the control of their immediate lords because such freedom would increase their opportunities for growing wealthy. Although there had been frith guilds in pre-Conquest England, it seems probable that in the face of the comparatively strong royal authority they had not developed into mer-

¹ A burgage was land held from the king or some other lord at a fixed money rent and subject neither to feudal nor manorial burdens.

chant guilds as on the Continent. These merchant guilds were associations of trades, more or less formal, for the maintenance of their common interest, whether against "foreigners" or non-members dwelling in the town. After the Norman Conquest, however, when there was a large influx of foreign artisans, especially weavers, the leading men among the native population seem to have drawn closer together in defence of such rights as they already possessed and in order to obtain more.

The first mention of a merchant guild is in a charter to Burford (1087-1107). Other instances occur under Henry I. and grants of a merchant guild were very common in Angevin charters. It is a curious fact, however, that although there are about a hundred grants known in England alone, some of the more important towns, including London itself, never possessed a formal merchant guild. Members of the guild alone possessed the right to buy and sell within the borough, wholesale or retail, at any time, even on market days, without payment of toll or custom. Probably the grant of a guild merchant was in some cases at least merely the confirmation of a local set of customs. For example, Newcastle-on-Tyne did not obtain a grant of guild merchant till the reign of John in 1216, and no charter by Henry I. exists, although the "Customs of Newcastle-upon-Tyne" are a well-known document upon which were based many Scottish town charters.

The Customs of Newcastle-upon-Tyne.—These customs can be divided into two sections, legal and mercantile. The former calls for no special note here beyond the remark that the burgesses probably owed their freedom from villein services and payments such as *merchet* and *heriot* to the desire of the Norman kings to attract population to the place, although the interest of the inhabitants

is plainly secondary to that of the king and his castle. The mercantile customs however are especially interesting. The borough was practically a new foundation of the time of Rufus and probably all male inhabitants enjoyed full burgess rights; we are told that if a villein remained for one year as a burgess without challenge by his lord he could remain for ever. (And yet Newcastle was not formally a chartered town.)

If a ship put in at Tynemouth the burgesses of Newcastle had the option of buying what they wanted, but in case of a dispute the trader could not be delayed beyond the third tide. The ship's merchandise, unless salt or herrings, had to be displayed on land. Although any burgess could buy what he would, the trader unless he were himself a burgess was forbidden to buy either within or without the vill, except from a burgess, the staple products of the district such as wool and hides, or indeed any merchandise whatever. Again, no one except a burgess could buy cloth for dyeing or full or shear it. We can safely assume that the burgesses agreed among themselves as to the price they would offer for the goods, which would only be enough to give the trader the barest possible profit. In later years and probably in the twelfth century also there was the right of *lot*, that is every burgess had a right under certain conditions to share in a profitable purchase and no burgess was supposed to make a private bargain with the trader.

Guild Restrictions.—In practice the guildsmen of the various towns allowed non-guildsmen to buy and sell *wholesale* under stringent conditions: they had to pay certain tolls, they might only sell their wares to guildsmen, and they could not buy certain articles, *e.g.* at Newcastle undyed cloth, of which the burgesses had special need. Provisions however could be bought and sold in

the town by county people on paying a toll, but no un-enfranchised person—i.e. a non-burgess—could open a shop or buy goods in the town except for his own use. Any attempt on the part of a burgess to “colour,” that is sell as his own, the goods of a non-burgess was severely punished, nor could he enter into any sort of partnership with a non-burgess, nor, if a craftsman, teach his trade to any but a formally enrolled apprentice. In all these regulations the burgesses were frankly seeking their own interests and the increase of their tolls. In most cases they had bought their “freedom” to act thus at a great price and had no care for “foreigners” outside their ranks.

Privileges of Guild Members.—In its early form the merchant guild represented a real fraternity among the townspeople. In course of time the legal burgesses, or freemen as they were called, ceased to include all the householders, but the guild continued to care for its actual members as before. When a member was sick he was visited and given suitable food, and if by evil chance he was imprisoned in another place the officers of the guild sought for his release. The guild prevented ruinous competition among members, it gave the local merchant letters of recommendation to the rulers of another city to help him to recover his debts or to open up business, and in short it procured for him as far as possible the protection and assistance which the merchant of to-day expects from the Central Government.

This help and protection had to be paid for by complete submission to the regulations laid down by the guild. Each guild had an alderman with whom were associated two or four colleagues elected by the members at a guild meeting. Other officers, including a chaplain, were also found. Only such persons as were at “scot and lot”

could be members of the guild; to be "at scot" they must contribute to the common expenses, and in return they were "at lot" and could share in the common advantages. The regulations made in guild were most minute, and in early days at least they were strictly enforced. If a man sold defective cloth he was fined or placed in the pillory, and if he persisted in his offence was deprived of his guild membership. Weavers and dyers were not allowed to work for non-freemen except when freemen could not keep them employed. The guild also fixed rates of wages and settled the rules to be observed by the different craftsmen.

The Borough Court.—Although the leading men of the various towns were eager to get their special trading customs acknowledged by the royal grant of a "merchant guild," it must not be forgotten that the essential organ of a borough was not its guild—for all boroughs did not possess a merchant guild—but its borough court. We may look upon the inhabitants of a town as developing two distinct institutions—the merchant guild and the borough court—for quite distinct purposes: the former dealt with social and economic affairs—one might almost say the duties of the burgesses towards each other—while the latter was concerned with the town's duties towards the king, the paying of his dues and the keeping of his peace. Of course the leading offices of both institutions tended to circulate among a small group of the borough's chief men, but the qualifications for membership of the two bodies differed.

The Burgesses.—When the town obtained a charter from the king allowing it to compound for his dues by paying yearly a lump sum known as the "firma burgi" or rent of the borough, the legal responsibility for the assessment, collection and payment of the sum rested with the

borough court. It was as burgesses that the inhabitants kept the streets and walls of the city in repair and defended it from riot and disorder within and from foreign foes without. In theory a burgess must reside within the town and own a burgage, that is a house held by that special tenure, or possess some equivalent qualification which guaranteed that he could fulfil his legal obligations. In practice we find that not only were there burgesses who were not members of the merchant guild, but that there were guildsmen who were not burgesses because they lived outside the town, and there were also inhabitants who were neither guildsmen nor burgesses. The burgess qualified by his tenure, the guildsman by being "at scot and lot" with his fellows and so able to carry on trade.

Rise of the Communes.—As the guildsmen of the town were naturally to be found mainly among the richer inhabitants, we can easily see how in practice they were able so to manage the town and the borough court in their own interest that the action of the two was confused. In some cases the two bodies had a common purse and the merchant guild took the lead in securing further liberties. The Commune of London had been legalised in 1191 after some years of unofficial existence. It was undoubtedly copied from similar organisations in Continental cities which had resulted from conspiracies and successful riotings against the authority of the local lord. The essence of a commune was the government of the town by a mayor and elected magistrates, and abroad the system was only maintained by armed force. Although there was some actual fighting in England also, especially between the great abbeys like St. Albans and Bury and their boroughs, most English towns were able to buy franchise after franchise from the kings, who, despite occasional attempts

to plunder the wealthier boroughs, on the whole observed the charters well.

The only legal commune in England was that of London, but all the towns strove to obtain as many of that city's liberties as possible. The old reeve or provost and the bailiffs who sometimes succeeded him in the less free towns were actually symbols of the lord's right to the profits of the vill. When the townspeople had bought the *firma burgi*, and so gained the right not only to make a profit on their bargain as the town prospered, but also to shut out all direct interference by the sheriff, they began to call their chief bailiff the mayor. By the end of the thirteenth century the larger towns had mostly won charters granting this title to the chief magistrate, and before long many of them had obtained the right to appoint their own coroner and also the royal escheator—the officer who watched over the king's rights—in their city.

Appearance of the own Sheriff.—In the fifteenth century we find that a few of the larger towns which the king especially desired to favour had gained the right to be reckoned a county in themselves, and to appoint their own sheriff as London had done since the time of Henry I. For example in 1400 Henry IV., probably on account of help given him by Roger Thornton, a rich merchant who was then mayor, granted the citizens of Newcastle-upon-Tyne the right to elect their own sheriff and also six aldermen, who with the mayor were to act as justices of the peace. It may be noted here that although the duties of the aldermen were at first purely judicial they became an important factor in the evolution of the close corporation which afterwards appeared in Newcastle and other towns.

Nature of Town Privileges.—Patriotism in the Middle Ages was largely local, and the leaders of the merchant

guild in each town sought not only to maintain their own exclusive rights to trade in their own city, but they also sought special privileges elsewhere. The old charters are full of curious words and phrases conferring on the grantees freedom from toll and custom in external towns, fairs, and markets. However, as we find that under Henry I.'s great charter the people of London and their goods were free from all customs and tolls throughout England, and that subsequent charters conferred similar privileges on other towns, it seems that there must have been constant clashing of rights or that the grants were more or less meaningless.

In practice we find that these exemptions were not so liberal as at first appears. The law courts indeed accepted the view that all tenants of the Ancient Demesne of the Crown, who claimed similar freedom from toll, were exempt so long as they merely bought goods for their own use or sold the produce of their land; if they bought and sold as merchants they were liable to toll. This rule seems to have applied to inhabitants of corporate towns except, as sometimes happened, when two towns, such as Winchester and Southampton in 1265, made commercial treaties with each other. London stood in a specially favoured position as to tolls, but in the case of the other towns the words of the charter, whatever its date, were sufficient to guarantee exemption from toll except in the case of actual merchants of other men's goods.

Right of "Withernam."—A certain number of the more important towns possessed by charter the right of *withernam*; that is, they were able to distrain on the goods of men of a town whose citizens had refused to acknowledge their right to be exempt from toll. This right was also extended to the recovery of debts or penalties owed by a citizen of another town. If a citizen of Yarmouth could

not pay debts owed at Lincoln the magistrates of the latter place would seize the goods of the first citizens of Yarmouth who came to Lincoln and so discharge the debt. Such a system was obviously inconvenient and bad for trade; therefore during the thirteenth century many cities obtained by charter immunity for their burgesses from the custom of *withernam*, unless the owner of the goods threatened with seizure was one of the "pledges" for the debt or a principal debtor himself.

Edward I. attempted to find a legal remedy against debtors. The First Statute of Westminster in 1275 forbade the practice of *withernam*. Eight years later the Statute of Acton Burnel ordered an official record to be kept of all debts at London, York and Bristol; the mayor had to distrain on the personal property of the debtor if he would not pay, and he was to be imprisoned if he could not pay. The Statute of Merchants two years later allowed the debt to be enrolled in any town and real¹ as well as personal property was made liable to distraint. It is doubtful if these laws could be enforced, for certain towns in the fourteenth century still thought it worth while to obtain charters of exemption from *withernam*, and the view was put forward in the fifteenth century that "New Statutes do not alter the free customs of Sandwich." However, some of the chartered towns, such as Leicester in 1277, acknowledged the statute and incorporated it into their own customals.²

The Assizes of Bread and Ale.—The degree to which the guild and the town government became amalgamated

¹ "Real" property was freehold land; personal property was any other kind of wealth.

² A Customal was a volume in which were written down the "customs," i.e. the rights and privileges, of a particular town or corporation.

had little effect on the control exercised over trade within the town. Everywhere it was agreed that the local authorities had the right to supervise all the details of buying and selling, whether wholesale or retail, and especially the price of food. The Assizes of Bread and Ale regulated the cost of bread according to the price of wheat and of ale according to the price of barley, oats and wheat. Quality as well as price was controlled, and offenders in the earlier days at least were severely fined. Perhaps the custom grew up locally, but from early days the central government attempted to enforce uniformity of weights and measures, and in 1202 and 1266 the Assizes of Bread and Ale were respectively the subject of royal legislation.

It is a commonplace of medieval writers that the cheating propensities of millers, bakers and brewers both in town and country made this stringent legislation necessary, and perhaps to a large extent it was effective. The modern tendency in similar legislation has been to allow a freer play to economic forces, which in time of scarcity produce a rise in prices as the only alternative to a more complete shortage of supplies at a legal and insufficient price. However, in the face of irrefutable evidence that at a time when England was able to grow her own food supplies provision dealers wilfully adulterated their goods or gave short weight, we cannot be surprised that the punishments inflicted went beyond fines. Fines were more profitable to the lord or the local authority, but they could not always be collected, and the ducking-stool and pillory sometimes took their place.

The Theory of the Just Price.—Down to the end of the Middle Ages the local and central authorities continued their efforts to maintain what they called the "just price." They believed that it was possible to fix a price for all goods which would be reasonably remunerative to the

seller without being unfair to the buyer. It was possible to calculate the normal cost of producing an article and also the cost of maintaining the standard of comfort usual in the producer's class. Could society have remained in a static condition there was nothing to object to in this system, but wars, pestilence and famine threw society out of joint and by the fifteenth century the system of minute regulation was becoming an unreality or a tyranny.

Objectors to the system in practice were treated as criminals who sought to injure the "poor commons." No man was allowed to *engross* or buy up all available supplies of food, *e.g.* grain as it grew in the field: it must be sold in the open market at the "just price." Equally blameworthy was the *forestaller* who intercepted supplies on their way to market, for both sorts of speculators would force up prices by holding back supplies. A third class of offender was the *regrator*, who bought goods in the market with no other object than to sell them again at a higher price. Fines, the pillory and loss of stock proved no deterrent to the offenders when the possible profits were great, and the state itself gave up the struggle towards the end of the eighteenth century. The speculator flourished even in medieval times simply because neither the state nor the municipality made adequate arrangements for the importation of foreign corn when the local harvest failed, nor did they, except in a few cases, build granaries to store home-grown wheat in years of plenty.

3. ORIGIN OF THE CRAFT GUILDS AND THEIR PLACE IN TOWN LIFE.

The Nature of the Early Craft Guilds.—We have seen how the traders and merchants of the towns secured royal acknowledgment of their merchant guild and how they

used the strength thus gained to acquire further commercial and municipal privileges. There was, however, another kind of guild in mediæval England, known as the Craft Guild or Mistery.¹ This was an organisation of the workers of one particular trade or craft, or, in the case of the smaller towns, of several allied trades, which was empowered by the king, or later by the municipal authority, to control the conditions of labour, the quality of the work, and the wages of those engaged in that particular trade.

The first independent trade or craft guild was that of the weavers. At the time of the Norman Conquest there occurred a large influx of foreign, largely French and Flemish, artisans into southern England, especially London. Finding themselves without rights and also disliked by the native townspeople, these immigrant weavers in self-defence seem to have organised guilds after the fashion of those of Rouen and Paris. By payments to the Norman and Angevin kings they secured royal acknowledgment, and so protection for their guilds from the hostile municipal authorities. In some towns the weavers were despised as well as disliked, but by Henry II.'s time there were recognised weavers' guilds in Huntingdon, Nottingham, Oxford, York, and Winchester, as well as London. As late as the reign of John the municipal authorities of London tried to suppress the weavers' guild there, which perhaps claimed to be entirely outside the jurisdiction of the mayor. As there were other recalcitrant guilds besides the weavers', we should perhaps see in the struggle, in some places at any rate, a selfish attempt of certain key-industries, such as bakers, fullers, and weavers, to secure special privileges for themselves at the expense of the rest of the inhabitants.

¹ Mistery is akin to the French word *métier*, meaning a trade or profession, and has nothing to do with "mystery" or "secret."

However, in course of time even the weavers would become largely anglicised, and as the towns grew in size there would be several persons of the same trade in each town who were members of the merchant guild. We must not read the experience of other countries into our own history and look for a struggle to control the town between aristocratic merchant guilds and democratic craft guilds. Apparently what happened in England was that the craft guilds came to be offshoots or developments of the merchant guilds for special trades. Undoubtedly disputes arose, but rather with the municipality than with the merchant guild, and certain craft guilds only secured a share in the municipal government after a struggle, while other craft guilds never made good their right at all.

The Composition and Powers of a Guild.—A craft guild was composed of three sets of persons—the master-craftsman, the journeyman, and the apprentice. The master would be a member of the merchant guild of his town, at least in theory, but actually he would be more interested in the life of his craft guild unless he were a very important citizen. At the head of the craft guild would be a master or wardens, elected, though often only indirectly, by the members, and there was generally a council of the senior members to assist. The officials of the guild had the right to search at any time the workshops of members. Any breach of the rules as to workmanship or quality was punished by the guild, generally with a fine, but sometimes the offender could be set in the stocks. If he proved recalcitrant despite his oath of obedience to the rules of the craft, the authority of the mayor was invoked or the guilty one might be punished by the Church courts as a perjurer.

The intervention of the mayor was possible because in medieval times the rules of the craft had to be approved

by the municipal authority, which could disallow inappropriate regulations. Generally, the rules were not unreasonable, and even the prohibition of night work was professedly made on account of the difficulty of supervision. However, there were cases where a craftsman had the alternative of being presented before the spiritual courts as a perjurer or of agreeing to a craft regulation intended to keep up prices, and the municipal authorities at times in the fifteenth century tried, though apparently in vain, to limit the custom of using the spiritual courts.

As a rule the master-craftsman worked with his men and apprentices, and his workshop, generally attached to his house, was not large. He did not require much capital or stock, since for the most part he made only to order, and he often made up his customer's own materials. He had himself been an apprentice in his youth, and had perhaps served a master as journeyman,¹ that is daily workman, for some time until able to set up in business for himself. It should be mentioned that, although craft guilds were most common in the towns, there were also rural guilds at any rate of carpenters and masons in Edward III.'s reign. Among the peasants, especially after the Black Death, there were organisations more closely resembling the modern trade union, and these, as has been said, played an important part in the revolt of 1381.

The Apprenticeship Regulations.—The basis of the craft guild was the system of apprenticeship, which had for its object the teaching of a particular craft in the most complete manner to youths, so as to provide a supply of competent workmen. The number of apprentices which a master might keep varied in the different towns, but it

¹ The French word *journée* means "a day."

was understood that he must not take any more than he could fully teach, nor in some towns could he use apprentices to such an extent as to prevent journeymen from finding work. In medieval times the period of apprenticeship varied, and indeed in London itself the system of formal apprenticeship can be traced back only to 1260, although before long it became obligatory everywhere.

The master took the apprentice to live with him in the house, and besides teaching him the trade was bound to feed and clothe him, and was also held responsible for the quality of the goods turned out by him, and for his general behaviour. The latter was not always of the best, and medieval towns were often disturbed by the rioting of the apprentices. The master had certain powers of chastisement over his apprentice, but if he used them unduly he might find himself forced to pay the doctor's bill as well as a fine to his guild.

The apprentice was able to appeal to the authorities of the guild if his master did not keep to his part of the bargain, and in case of grave and continued neglect he was allowed to withdraw his service. In return he had to swear to be faithful and obedient to his master, and not to spoil or waste his goods. The apprentice could not leave his master, nor could he trade on his own account during his apprenticeship. He must not frequent ale-houses or gaming-houses, nor could he marry without his master's leave. There were frequent complaints by masters against the "haughtiness and proud stomachs" of the apprentices. They were forbidden to wear daggers or fine clothes, and were expected to content themselves with the study of their craft and the simple life of their masters. Some apprentices accepted the situation more or less, and the industrious apprentice might hope as a reward to be allowed to marry his master's daughter and

become a partner in the business. It should be added that attempts were made by the exaction of heavy premiums to confine apprenticeship to the children of burgesses and craftsmen, but even parliamentary interference was not always successful, especially as the masters prospered and steadily increased the social gap between themselves and their employees.

The municipal authorities insisted that all indentures of apprenticeship should be enrolled as early as possible, so that only those really eligible might claim to be "free-men of the city" when they had finished their apprenticeship. It became difficult in some places for any person who had not served an apprenticeship to enter a guild and so gain the right to work. Sometimes the apprentice was bound to serve his late master for one year as journeyman, and to present a "master-piece" or test of his workmanship before he was considered fully qualified.

Drawbacks of the Medieval System.—Although the system of craft guilds and apprenticeship played a most important, and in its better days a most beneficial, part in social life, it developed in practice several flaws and drawbacks. We must bear in mind that there was no uniformity of regulations. At the best the administration of the system lay in the hands of the municipal authorities, who grew more and more out of touch with the actual workers. Not till Elizabeth's statute of 1563 did the State make any serious effort to establish a uniform and obligatory system. In practice the craft guilds, or rather the chief men in them, looked to their own interests as producers and kept prices high. The official "searchers," if they were not venal, were at any rate conservative, and condemned alike careless workmanship and new methods. As wages and prices were both fixed by the guilds there was no incentive to seek out labour-saving

inventions or processes that might cheapen the cost of production, for the play of economic forces was restrained where possible.

The Beginnings of the Domestic System.—Moreover, in medieval times the sphere of influence of the craft guilds seldom extended beyond the town's boundaries. The result was that in the fifteenth century spinning, weaving, and many other crafts were practised in the villages, and the guild restrictions as to quality and price were not observed under this *Domestic System*, as it is sometimes called by historians. Naturally the town craftsmen, handicapped by guild regulations, were undersold, and during the fifteenth century many of the old towns decayed and had to seek from the king remission of part at least of their *firma burgi*. They were also handicapped by loss of population through pestilences and by the heavy taxation due to war.

The Decay of the Craft Guilds.—However, perhaps the main cause of the decay of the craft guilds, apart from the inevitable failure to meet new conditions, was their own selfish and short-sighted policy. Not content with discouraging new processes, they attempted to establish a monopoly of manufacture under intolerable conditions. Having made it impossible, or at any rate very difficult, for any non-guildsman to work at his craft in a corporate town, they deliberately narrowed the right of admission to the guild by heavy entrance fees and hard conditions. The control of the guilds fell more and more into the hands of an oligarchy of the richer masters, and many of the poorer journeymen, finding that attempts to form "yeomen guilds" or societies did not help them, seem to have migrated outside the corporate towns. By the fifteenth century the more important guilds had often secured the right of appointing the mayor and governing

body of the town, to the detriment of non-guildsmen and the members of the lesser guilds. The result was that both towns and guilds ceased to be democratic even in the medieval sense. They were helpless before the lords in the fifteenth and the king in the sixteenth century, and were potent only for oppression.

4. RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL LIFE IN MEDIEVAL TIMES.

The Nature of Medieval Pilgrimages.—Avowed dissent from the Catholic Church was rare in medieval England, and the Church played so important a part in the life of the people that religious and social matters cannot easily be distinguished. Even holidays were taken in the form of pilgrimages to the shrine of some English or foreign saint, just as the Russian peasant still betakes himself to Kiev or Jerusalem if possible once in his life. Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales* has immortalised the great pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas of Canterbury.

Importance of Fairs and Markets.—Probably by far the larger portion of the internal trade of medieval England was done at the various markets and fairs: the market served the immediate locality, whereas the fair drew its customers from the whole country. Both were originally the result of the gathering of pilgrims round some holy shrine, and some of the fairs, such as that of St. Cuthbert at Durham, were of pre-Conquest origin. The pilgrims were often also traders, who rejoiced at the truce to the continual warfare which the influence of the Church procured. No one could be arrested at the fair for any former crime or debt,¹ but offences committed at the fair, whatever their nature, were punished on the spot at the special court of Pie-powder or “dusty-foot,” while com-

¹ The Rolls of St. Ives suggest that this rule was not invariable.

mercial cases were decided by the law-merchant—the “private international law of the Middle Ages.”

Fairs and markets were in theory held by royal grant to the owner or lord, who was quite often an abbot or bishop. They lasted for a definite number of days only, and the lord took the profit of the tolls for the traders’ stalls and the fines. It was only rarely that the fair was toll-free. However, the traders were assured of customers, as no other fairs were allowed in the immediate neighbourhood, and sometimes, as at Winchester, the townspeople had to close their own shops for the advantage of the fair. Besides the stalls for the goods of every-day life there were also amusements, such as performing animals, jugglers, and other less innocent things.

One of the most important fairs was that held at Stourbridge¹ near Cambridge. Near by was the fair of St. Ives. St. Bartholomew’s fair in London was famous for the cloth sold there, while that of St. Giles at Winchester, mentioned in *Piers Plowman*, served the trade between England and the Continent. Some of the fairs flourished largely because of the foreign merchants who visited them, and the decay of these meetings has been traced to the fact that Englishmen gradually got control of their own foreign trade and made it unprofitable for foreigners to frequent the fairs.

The Religious and Educational Side of the Guilds.—Even the guilds were in their origin often religious fraternities, and supported wholly or in part the chaplain who said masses for the souls of past and present brethren at the Chantry altar in their parish church. Most guilds kept a lamp burning continually before the altar of their

¹ According to the local tradition 60,000 people sometimes attended this fair in the Middle Ages, and foreigners used to come up the river from King’s Lynn in boats.

patron saint. Some of the richer guilds founded schools and colleges, and many of the Grammar Schools which arose under the Tudors owed a large part of their endowments, if not an earlier existence, to the zeal for education shown by the old guilds or by rich individual guildsmen.

The Corpus Christi Guild Plays.—Once every year at the Feast of Corpus Christi it was the custom in most towns that each of the craft guilds should produce a play based upon some story in the Bible suitable to their craft; for example, at Newcastle the shipwrights produced the building of Noah's Ark. Similar plays had long been used by the clergy for teaching the Bible stories to their illiterate parishioners. The members of the various guilds had to meet at a fixed place on the appointed day and proceed in their *regalia* to certain stations where the tableau—for that word best describes the performance—of their particular guild was to be presented to different audiences in turn on a sort of waggon or movable platform.

Several cycles or sets of these plays have come down to us. The performers did not scruple to adapt the Bible story, and they seasoned their speeches with jokes and remarks in what would appear to-day to be doubtful taste. Most elaborate costumes and stage accessories were used, and by the fifteenth century the expense, aided by a certain decadence in zeal, led to a partial abandonment of the performance by some of the guilds. However, the system of presenting the plays survived the Reformation and only came to an end later in Elizabeth's reign. The craft guilds were now less religious in character, some of the members as Puritans disliked the system, especially its connexion with the feast of Corpus Christi, and above all there was the competition of the professional theatre, for which Shakespeare did so much.

The Guilds as Courts of Arbitration.—The medieval

townsman was rather a quarrelsome person, but it was not deemed meet that a guildsman should go to law with any of the guild brethren without the permission of the guild authorities, who would only give it when they failed to settle the matter themselves. Despite a statute passed in 1504 the guilds persisted in fining members who disregarded this rule by going to law. However, in their best days, when most craftsmen in a town were allowed, not to say forced, to belong to the guild of their craft, the guilds did try to maintain the state of democratic equality and brotherliness they professed. There was a strict demarcation between the work of the different crafts, and it was laid down that the cobbler should only repair boots and the cordwainer only make them. If a man in some towns had the right to practise two trades he must subscribe to the guilds of both. However, there were very few towns with the London custom that a man who was "free" of one trade might practise any others he pleased. Actually there was a statute passed in 1363 confining each craftsman to a single trade, except in the case of women workers.

Women Workers in the Middle Ages.—The position of the woman worker in the Middle Ages was curious. She could be enrolled in certain important crafts such as that of the Barber-Surgeons. She could also be a brewer, spinner, weaver, or dyer in most places, and one fourth of the cloth made at York in the fourteenth century was made by women. The Act of 1363 definitely recognised woman's right to be "the eternal amateur" and a "jack-of-all-trades," and recent investigations have made it clear that, although she may have stood on rather a lower level than the workman, her position in the world of labour was far from being that of a mere "unpaid domestic drudge." However, during the fifteenth and sixteenth

centuries, in the corporate towns at least, the male workers, jealous of her competition, made regulations that no craftsman might teach his trade to any women, not even to his wife or daughters. In practice a widow who had no other means of support might continue her late husband's business and take apprentices and journeymen to assist her. Moreover we find that the silk workers, especially in London, were often women, but on one occasion at least, in 1370, they had to petition the king for redress against a Lombard merchant who was attempting to "corner" the raw material. However, outside the corporate towns women were free to engage in suitable employment and formed an appreciable proportion of those who earned their living under the Domestic System.

Charitable Arrangements in Medieval Days.—The only approach to a Poor Law in medieval England was to be found in the penal clauses against idlers contained in the Statutes of Labourers. No other legislation was necessary at first, for the guild like the manor looked after the interests of its members when they fell sick or on evil days. The guilds were in one aspect friendly societies; they gave pensions and allowances, and the richer members often left money for the poor or for lending to young men desirous of starting as master-craftsmen. However, the non-guildsmen had to trust to the wide and often indiscriminating charity of the Church and pious laymen. Hospitals for lepers or other sick were common, but after the Black Death the squalor and poverty of the poor demanded more than voluntary methods could provide, even if the monks and friars had not themselves degenerated from former conceptions of Christian charity.

Sumptuary Laws and Civic Patriotism.—However, the medieval citizen who gained wealth generally used it

nobly. The sumptuary laws of Edward III. are a token of popular dislike to vulgar ostentation, even if they were not always effective; and it was not unknown for a rich lady to bequeath her costliest robes to be made into vestments for Divine Service. Men spent little on their own houses till near the close of the Middle Ages, but they gloried in being able to share in the building of a church or hospital or college, or to strengthen the walls of their city.

5. THE GUILDS AND FOREIGN TRADE.

Alien Merchants and English Trade.—Before the Conquest and for many years afterwards England's foreign trade was very largely in the hands of aliens. During Canute's reign a strong Danish or Scandinavian settlement grew up in London, and under the Confessor and the early Norman kings the Cologne merchants—the Men of the Emperor who had been settled in London during the reign of Ethelred II.—found rivals in the Norman merchants of Rouen and traders from the Low Countries. The English townspeople viewed these aliens with mixed feelings. On the one hand they were useful purveyors of desirable foreign commodities, so long as they sold wholesale only to the merchants of the guild and made their purchases solely from the privileged townspeople. On the other hand they were favoured by the kings for the sake of the *prises* or customs duties they gave, and were not always ready to take away their gains in the form of English goods within the usual forty days; it was objected against them that they preferred to take away with them English money at a time when the supply of the circulating medium was already too small for home needs.

Magna Carta contained two mutually contradictory

clauses: one guaranteed their liberties and free customs to London and the other chartered towns, while the other promised that foreign merchants should be allowed to trade freely in England untroubled "by evil tolls." The towns maintained that the foreign traders must take second place, but the Hanseatic League, of which more will be said afterwards, had already special rights, and either certain towns themselves made concessions to merchants of other foreign towns, or the kings, especially Henry III. and Edward I., favoured the foreigners at the expense of the native towns.

Economic Policy of Edward I. and Edward II.—Edward I. as usual acted from policy, not from prejudice. He was jealous of the strength of the burgesses, especially those of London, and made no scruple of taking the charters of towns into his hands for some more or less imaginary offence and forcing the burgesses to redeem them. As for the foreign merchants, they had to pay dearly for his favour, and towards the end of his reign the *Carta Mercatoria* exacted a special rate of customs duties—the *Nova Custuma*—from the aliens in return for permission to trade wholesale freely. It has been said that Edward II.'s failure to resist the Lords Ordainers and his final deposition were largely due to his patronage of foreign merchants, and certainly the early commercial legislation of Edward III. was more in favour of native traders.

Edward III.'s Financial Difficulties.—However, before long Edward III. definitely¹ adopted the policy of "opulence"—plenty and the open door—rather than that later

¹ Recent research tends to indicate that the commercial policy of Edward III. was rather opportunist than constructive. See G. Unwin, *Finance and Trade under Edward III.* (1918).

known as "mercantilism"—the policy of making England as far as possible a self-supporting industrial nation, able to defend itself against foreign enemies. The king was not altogether a free agent. The expulsion of the Jews—the usual royal bankers—in 1290 had forced Edward I. and his successors to look to French and Italian merchants for loans to carry on their wars. These loans were often secured on the customs duties. The old customs system had been re-organised in 1275 and the growing demand for English wool and hides abroad had somewhat helped the king to meet the increasing expenses of government, especially when loans were partly repayable in commercial privileges to foreigners which apparently cost the king nothing.

Origin of Tonnage and Poundage.—However, the king's opportunities for raising funds independently of Parliament were becoming fewer and fewer. In 1340 he had to abandon the practice of "tallaging," that is arbitrarily taxing the tenants on the royal demesne; in 1362 he had to agree that no subsidy should be set on wool by merchants or any other body without the consent of Parliament; and finally in 1373 he had to accept a scheme by which the customs duties—now henceforth known as "Tonnage and Poundage"—were granted by Parliament at a fixed rate for a definite period only.

Why Edward III. favoured Foreigners.—Edward III. favoured aliens not only because he needed their money for his wars, but also because he needed the help of the aliens' rulers, especially the leaders of the Flemings. Probably the real cause of the Hundred Years' War was the possible danger to English trade which Edward III. foresaw would arise if Philip VI. of France obtained control of the rich cities of the Low Countries. The Flemish merchants not only bought English wool, but

they also allowed the English to act as middlemen and supply them with wine from the English king's Gascon lands, to which English merchants sold Flemish cloth. Edward III. allied himself with Jakob van Artevelde, the rich guildsman of Ghent, who was leading the burgesses against their Count and his supporter Philip VI., but it was probably from selfish motives—the desire to improve the English cloth manufacture and so increase his own revenue—that he invited over to England capitalist weavers such as John Kempe the Fleming in 1331 and the Zealand weavers who came later.

The English Weaving Industry in Early Times.—We know very little about the early history of English weaving, but Edward III. based his offer to Kempe on “the *decay* of the art of weaving.” There is evidence that the number of weavers in certain towns had diminished during the early thirteenth century, but even fifty years before Kempe's arrival towns such as Stamford, Beverley and York were exporting cloth to Venice and Spain, and Ipswich was exporting cloth made in the eastern counties, when the Ipswich Domesday was being compiled (c. 1300). Probably the English weavers suffered from the competition of the Flemings in the thirteenth century, but the Flemings were largely dependent on English wool and Henry III. or Edward I. had no hesitation in cutting off the supply when he quarrelled with their count. The weavers of Flanders tended to ally themselves with the English king, whose friendship was necessary for them, and by Edward II.'s reign we can see how the merchants, for example of Newcastle, had established branches in Flemish towns and were exporting wool and importing cloth.

The English cloth trade was closely supervised both as to length, width and quality by the Royal Aulnager and

his deputies. The system in principle dated back at least to Richard I.'s Assize of Cloth in 1197; and although Edward II. by his Ordinance of the Staple in 1327 allowed cloth to be made of any length, the Assize was revived in 1328, and Edward III. wavered between the partial relaxation of the Assize to please immigrant weavers and its complete maintenance in the case of imported foreign cloths. His successors were equally undecided, but in 1411 the Assize was definitely confirmed. There was less uncertainty about the regulation that all cloths were to be sold publicly in a place set apart in each town, so that the king should not lose his customs. The famous London cloth market known as Blackwell Hall had its counterpart in the various provincial towns.

Rise of the Capitalist Clothiers.—During Edward III.'s reign the native cloth manufacture began to absorb more and more of the English wool supply, and a capitalist class known as the "clothiers" began to appear. The clothiers not only turned the guild weavers into simple wage-earners, but they also obtained an increasing control of the town government. Both in town and country the clothiers set up looms in their own houses or supplied the raw materials to spinners and weavers under the Domestic System. Probably the evolution of the woollen industry from the guild to capitalist system was necessary if England was to develop an export of native cloth, but the process was undoubtedly accompanied by hardship to the workman, and especially to the spinners, who were usually women and children.

The Staple System and the Staplers.—Part of the system of Government control of trade in the Middle Ages was the institution known as the Staple: the king fixed upon some town or towns at home or abroad at which alone English wool could be legally sold. Prob-

ably the main object of the king was the easier collection of his revenues, but the various rulers of Flanders and the Low Countries generally were so eager that the Staple town should be in their dominions that the king found it a useful diplomatic weapon. At first the Staple town was abroad, as early as 1266 according to the Merchant Staplers¹; at Dordrecht in 1285, at Bruges in 1296, and at Antwerp as a rule for the remainder of Edward I.'s reign. However, in 1297 nine English towns—Newcastle, Hull, Boston, Yarmouth, Ipswich, London, Sandwich, Southampton, and Bristol—were fixed by ordinance as Staple *export* towns, and Edward II., or probably the Lords Ordainers, went a step further by the Ordinance of the Staple (1313) and made it compulsory for all wool to be taken to a definite Staple town on the Continent. The merchants who exported wool over sea and probably had already formed some kind of league were now organised under a "mayor and council," and they received authority, frequently confirmed later, to punish all who broke the Ordinance of the Staple.

The foreign merchants objected to the system, but the English merchants actually tried to confine the Staple to England. Hugh le Despenser had just agreed to this in 1326 when he was overthrown, and foreign politics led to the Staple regulations being relaxed and later to the Staple being fixed at various towns in Flanders. Finally, when Edward III. captured Calais in 1347 it gradually obtained the Staple for all important commodities, and from 1391 till its loss in 1558 it remained the Staple town, partly

¹ Although the Merchant Staplers only received a formal charter in 1313, they had existed at least fifty years earlier as independent exporters of wool. For their story and that of their successful rivals the Merchant Adventurers see Lucas, *The Beginning of English Overseas Enterprise* (Clarendon Press).

because the revenues from the Staple could be used to pay the garrison.

Richard II.'s Protectionist Policy.—Richard II. largely reversed his grandfather's commercial policy in favour of protectionism, and from this reign the "mercantile" policy is always more or less in evidence. The king, in order to strengthen the Royal Navy, desired to build up a mercantile marine by Navigation Acts which favoured English shipping in the matter of duties, and he naturally desired to foster native industries, especially cloth manufacture, to provide outward cargoes. The Merchant Staplers were chiefly, if not solely, concerned in the export of wool, but some of them at any rate were at an early period organised as the Fraternity of St. Thomas of Canterbury and obtained various trading rights from foreign rulers in the thirteenth century. By 1360 they were an organised company under the rule of John Walewayn, whom Edward III. described as "Governor of our merchants in Flanders," and they were especially concerned in the export of English cloth.

Origin of the Merchant Adventurers.—At the end of the fourteenth century some of the English merchants who dwelt in "Prussia, Scone, Sound, and the Hanse" found their mutual rivalry disadvantageous, and in 1391 Richard II. gave them a charter under which they were allowed to elect an annual governor to settle their disputes. Richard's charter was confirmed in 1404 by Henry IV., who four years later conferred similar privileges on English merchants in Scandinavia. In 1407 he also gave a fresh charter to the old company in Flanders, already recognised by Edward III. in 1360. This last mentioned company was the nucleus of the body generally known as the *Mercatores Venturarii* or Merchant Adventurers, and had special connection with London. How-

ever, not only had it provincial members, but in the fifteenth century other groups of Merchant Adventurers sprang up at Exeter, Bristol, and Newcastle. The Newcastle Merchant Adventurers, representing the three fraternities of mercers, drapers and boothmen or corn-merchants, could make out a good case of continuity with the ancient Merchant Guild of Newcastle dating from 1216, and maintained a certain amount of independence.

The organisation and methods of business of the Merchant Adventurers will be dealt with later. It may be sufficient to mention here that they soon came into fierce rivalry with the parent body, the Staplers, and in the end obtained the wished-for monopoly of exporting English cloth. More serious and lengthy was their struggle with the Hanseatic League of German Merchants, at the head of which was the city of Lübeck. Although in theory only a trading body, the Hanseatic League owned armies and war fleets; it defeated the king of Denmark and negotiated with kings on equal terms. In England it had special privileges, including steelyards or fortified factories in London and other towns, and was for a time responsible for the defence and maintenance of Bishop's Gate, London. Perhaps its chief advantage was the enjoyment of a preferential tariff over both English and alien merchants.

Growing Hostility to the Hanseatic League.—As a class of English export traders grew up they began to object to the preferential position of their Hanseatic rivals, especially as the latter treated with great cruelty and injustice any unfortunate English merchants in the Baltic lands who fell into their power. The House of Commons championed the English herring merchants against their oppressors in 1371, and in 1378 the Hanseatic

League complained that they were being deprived of their privileges and otherwise molested in London. From the reply of the London city authorities we learn that this was the work of Parliament, and the League only regained its privileges in 1390 by a formal agreement which provided that English merchants should be allowed to trade freely in "Prussia" (the South Eastern Baltic lands) and German merchants in England.

However, the struggle broke out again almost at once, and English ships in the Baltic were seized by the League in revenge for the capture of their own vessels. The Hanseatic traders undoubtedly resented in no gentle manner the attempts of English traders to win a share in the valuable Scandinavian trade hitherto monopolised by the Hansa, but it seems clear that under the influence of the new Protectionist doctrines the English government, or at any rate the more powerful guilds, were deliberately cutting down the old privileges of the League. Henry IV. was too uncertain of his throne to quarrel with the powerful Easterlings, as the Hanseatic League is sometimes called, and patched up a peace in 1409, but only after he had appeased the English merchants by his charter to them in 1407.

The Libelle of English Polycye: its Doctrines.—Encouraged by their charter the Merchant Adventurers renewed the struggle, and the Hansa played into their hands by continuing to ill-treat Englishmen in the Baltic lands. At last open war again broke out in 1468 and the Hansards had to abandon their English factories, to some of which they never returned. Edward IV. owed his crown largely to the support of the London merchants, and their complete triumph seemed at hand when by Warwick's treachery he lost the throne. The Hansards took a leading part in his restoration in 1471, and their

price was the Treaty of Utrecht, 1473, which restored all their privileges on condition that English merchants received reciprocal concessions. The Tudors were wiser or more fortunate than Edward IV. and the Merchant Adventurers' triumph was only postponed. The new commercial policy of England was largely based on that enunciated in the *Libelle of English Polycye*, by an anonymous fifteenth-century author. England was able to control the trade routes of Western Europe because she held both Dover and Calais; she could thus become the leading commercial nation of the world. Flanders, upon which the world depended for cloth, was in turn dependent on English wool. So long as the English fleet retained command of the "narrow seas"—the English Channel—we could force all nations to accept our terms. The writer also gives an interesting criticism of England's trade relations with Florence, Venice and Genoa. The two former cities only sent useless and costly trifles and took away our own valuable products, while Genoa supplied us with useful articles such as cotton, gold, oil, silk, and pepper. Naturally he was a warm champion of the policy of the Navigation Acts.

The *Libelle of English Polycye* and the somewhat later writing known as *On England's Commercial Policy* are perhaps of the nature of manifestoes by the Merchant Adventurers and their friends. The latter work insists on England's industrial advantages: she possessed wool and cloth which the nations wanted, and she ought to sell them dearly and not allow foreigners to enrich themselves at her expense. We can already see the new industrial England coming into being in which the middle classes, protected by the king against oppression either at home or abroad, made the land wealthy and strong. England became more and more a land of industrial towns, and it

was the task of the Tudors to adapt the old institutions to the new conditions. Industrial and social organisations became alike national rather than local, and gradually the guild system was discarded even as an instrument of the central government in the regulation of trade and industry. Its place in an age of competition has been taken partly by social legislation and partly by the rival trade unions of masters and their workmen.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TUDOR SOLUTION OF ECONOMIC PROBLEMS: STATE CONTROL.

I. THE AGRARIAN PROBLEM.

Changed Attitude of the State.—Catastrophic changes occur even more rarely in the social and economic than in the political life of a nation. Throughout the fifteenth century the manorial system was steadily decaying and the guild system was being transformed; in the sixteenth century the process in each case was quickened as the result of the new forces that came into action. Apart from the Statutes of Labourers and a hesitating championship of English merchants against their foreign rivals, the later Plantagenet kings interfered very little in economic affairs. The Tudors, however, had a different conception of their duty, and their proposed solution—State, that is royal, control—was gradually worked out during the sixteenth century. Probably no two sovereigns of this line saw the problem exactly in the same light; indeed, it varied almost from decade to decade, but every one of the Tudors realised how closely it concerned themselves, and that positive remedies were necessary.

The Copyholders.—We have seen in an earlier chapter how the landowners in the fifteenth century were gradually abandoning the economically unprofitable task of

exacting labour services. In the early sixteenth century bailiff-farming was seldom found outside ecclesiastical estates. Elsewhere one of three results had come about. The first was the case where the descendants of the old villeins held the old husbandlands or virgates at a fixed money rent, at any rate in practice, and were coming to be known generally as copyholders, because the title-deed consisted of a copy of the entry on the lord's court-roll stating that on a given date they had paid a small fine to take over the holding of their predecessor on the same terms as he held it.

It is not clear how or when the law came to recognise their legal right to their holdings, but even before the Black Death they seem to have been irremovable so long as they paid their customary dues. Doubtless the scarcity of tenants in the fifteenth century made the lords complaisant, and the copyholders gained heavily when the fall in the value of money made their rents and fines more and more nominal. They were generally able to sell or lease their rights, and when it was too late the lords began to challenge their position. It is a mistake to think that the Tudor kings deliberately sided with the copyholders against the lords: they certainly where possible held the balance even. Doubtless there were cases in which powerful lords were able to expel their copyholders, but, as a rule, the latter could secure royal protection so long as they could prove their copyhold custom. Such a system of dual ownership was only possible in the case of agricultural land. Legally the minerals belonged to the lord, and copyhold land was under his control in other ways. Thus when land became more of a saleable commodity, the practice arose of the copyholder "enfranchising" his land by buying out the lord's share where possible.

The Leaseholders.—The second type of tenancy was the leasehold. . Leases “for a term of years,” as opposed to the ordinary villein holding “for life,” were known at an early date. We have seen how after the Black Death the lords granted the bondage holdings on easy terms, but for a limited time or until someone offered the old rent. The tenant often found his own stock and implements, but sometimes he took a “stock and land” lease. His land often included part of the old demesne as well as villein land, for both were composed of a number of scattered strips in the various fields. The leaseholds varied greatly in size, and in the sixteenth century the rent often approached the economic limit owing to the system of fines on renewal. The leaseholder had no legal right of renewal, and the fines levied by the lords when they renewed the leases tended always to be higher than copyhold fines and to increase. Often the leaseholder was glad to compromise with his lord and accept a lease for twenty-one years, renewable every seven years, sometimes at an increased fine. But for the Star Chamber and the Court of Requests—the Poor Man’s Court—the lot of the leaseholder and the copyholder alike would have been far harder even than it was.

Enclosures for Pasture.—However, it was the third kind of tenancy—enclosures for pasture—that produced the greatest injustice in the sixteenth century. There were two kinds of enclosure: for arable and for sheep-farming. In the former case the freeholders got possession by purchase or exchange of a series of neighbouring strips, which they tilled independently of the village system. However, there were few freeholders at first, although the number increased during the sixteenth century as men began to purchase land as a means of investment. Enclosure for sheep-farming had far more

revolutionary effects. It was natural that after the Black Death the vacant villein holdings should be thrown into the waste and used as pasture for sheep, but as the price of wool rose with the increasing output of cloth, cases became more and more common where the lord of the manor expelled not only leasehold but also in some cases copyhold tenants, so that he might feed the more profitable sheep on their holdings.

Causes of Agrarian Discontent.—Dr. Cunningham has pointed out that the key to the agrarian troubles of the early sixteenth century is to be found in the new ideas of estate management that were coming into operation. It is of course possible to understate the degree to which some manors went in exporting their surplus products to outside markets, but as a rule before the Black Death the medieval manor catered mainly for its own inhabitants, and the system was one of subsistence agriculture and natural, not money, economy. However, during the fifteenth century numbers of people accumulated capital by the export of wool or the manufacture of cloth, and many of them bought land. They naturally looked upon their new purchase from an economic point of view. In the sixteenth century the dissolution of the monasteries ultimately threw fresh land on the market, and the difficulty of the problem was in this case aggravated by the fact that the monks were, as a rule, good or at any rate easy-going conservative landlords.

The "Selfishness" of the New Landowners.—The new owners desired to get out of the land what was most profitable and pleasing to themselves, but the prevailing system of interlaced strips and common pasture over not only the waste, but also at certain seasons over the arable land, made it inevitable that their efforts to "improve" their land should be to the detriment of those villagers

who wished to follow the older system. When a man owned the whole or the larger portion of the village he might pull down cottages or houses to increase the size of his deer-park. The king did not object to this, as the owner of the deer-park would presumably live near it for some portion of the year, and it is only fair to add that Henry VIII. attempted to make the new owners of the monastic lands keep up houses on their estates also.

Convertible Husbandry.—Another innovation—convertible husbandry—was often due not so much to the action of the lords themselves as to that of their more enterprising tenants, who purchased from them the right to “contract out” of the old village system. Enclosure for arable purposes by freeholders has already been referred to, but convertible husbandry was also practised by tenants who leased several “farms” and divided up their land into a number of “closes,” or separate fields, and used them for tillage or pasture in turn as seemed most convenient, for such tenants often kept a considerable number of sheep.

We can understand that the remaining tenants under the old system would feel injured, as their pasture would be sensibly diminished, and Dr. Cunningham suggests that it was the extension of convertible husbandry rather than the actual enclosures for sheep-farming that Ket and his followers attacked in 1549. However, convertible husbandry was the more profitable form, and those who practised it won the support of their landlords by the higher rent they could pay. It undoubtedly caused a certain amount of depopulation, as the village fell into the hands of a few capitalist farmers, who, even with their labourers, fell short of the number of the former peasantry, but the Tudor kings winked at that because the system increased the output of food. Indeed, Bacon

says that Henry VII. was content to try and guide the change, and to prevent the small men from being crowded out, in the hope that the practice of farming in severalty might be adopted generally without injury to anyone.

Enclosures for Sheep-farming.—It is possible for anyone to defend the introduction of convertible husbandry while at the same time deprecating the hardships it inevitably caused, but the undoubted evils produced by the reckless extension of enclosures for sheep-farming made even the selfish Tudors realise that the increased wealth could be bought too dearly. The principal offenders seem to have been the new nobility, who had no roots in the soil and so no thought for their dependants; but the rich merchants and speculators must share the blame. The sixteenth century was a time when men began to think more of the rights than of the duties of property, and the selfish spirit of individualism found nothing to restrain it in the teaching of the new faith, which laid more stress on the importance of the individual than on the general welfare of the society in which he lived.

Its Disadvantages to the State.—Enclosure for sheep-farming had three main disadvantages: it deprived the realm of that "bold peasantry" who were so important when armies had to be raised for its defence; it led to absenteeism on the part of landowners, and so to a lack of interest in local affairs on the part of the natural champions of the district; moreover, although the sheep-farmer himself became rich, the nation as a whole suffered, because the production of food was less and so the cost of living rose. It is true that much of the land formerly under the plough had become exhausted by repeated unscientific croppings, and that other large portions were, in the absence of artificial manures, more suitable for sheep-walks than for arable farming. It is also

undeniable that, as Henry VII. foresaw, it was possible by the practice of convertible husbandry to raise sufficient food for national needs and yet devote large areas to sheep-farming. The Tudor kings would allow the individual to pursue his own advantage to a greater degree than had been possible formerly, but they still maintained that, however harmful innovations might be to individuals, they must not be harmful to the nation as a whole, for otherwise they would injure the king.

Attempted Remedies.—The Tudors grasped early the fact that enclosures meant depopulation, and so ultimately that the king would be weakened as against his foes; none of them realised that enclosures were but a symptom of the agrarian revolution out of which a new England was to emerge with individualism rather than custom as its chief source of wealth. It is pathetic to find that even Edward VI., the “Josiah” of the Reformers, had to go back to the Canonists for his remedy for the evils of the time: “men . . . had been placed by God in ranks or orders, each with its own work to do, and each with its own appropriate mode of life.” He maintained that no gentleman should take to sheep-farming, no merchant should become a farmer, no farmer should take more than one farm and no man ply more than one trade; no one should have more “than the proportion of the country would bear.”

“**The Discourse of the Common Weal.**”—Perhaps Edward VI. had not read *The Discourse of the Common Weal*, written in 1549 by John Hales, for he could have learnt a great deal from “the Doctor”—the leading speaker of the dialogue—whose views reflect in many points the opinion of Edward’s favourite Court Preacher, Bishop Latimer. The Doctor, unlike Edward VI., did not believe that the new spirit of enterprise would be a danger to the State;

rather he realised that the wealth if produced should be taxed, and so provide means for strengthening the king. "How can a king have treasure," he asks in effect, "if the king's subjects have none?" He agreed with the Mercantilists, whose ideas will be described later, that the statesman "should play upon self-interest so as to direct it into the wisest channels." Avarice, not enterprise, was to be condemned, and he defines avarice as the desire to seek one's own gain even at the expense of another's loss. When enterprise does not thus degenerate into avarice it is actually beneficial to the State as well as to the individual, and the State's real duty is not to check enterprise, but merely to "take from men as far as possible the occasion of their covetousness." Other parts of the dialogue are an amazing anticipation of the remedial measures of Burleigh and Elizabeth, such as the reform of the coinage, the introduction of new trades by the help of skilled foreigners, and the direct encouragement of tillage until enclosure for sheep-farming ceased to be more profitable.

Legislation against Enclosures.—The legislation of the early Tudors failed to remedy the undoubted evils of enclosures largely because it contented itself with purely negative repression, instead of giving the peasant a legal title to his holding or alternatively providing him with another means of subsistence by introducing new industries. Acts were passed in 1489, 1514, and 1515 ordering that no man should have more than one farm, and that the rent of no farm should exceed ten marks yearly. The landowners seem to have disregarded these Acts, and therefore in 1517 Wolsey, though a grazier's son himself, took up the matter in earnest, and by so doing increased his unpopularity with the upper and middle classes. He set up a Royal Inquisition on De-

population and sent the Commissioners to enquire in person as to the areas enclosed in each county since 1488, the number of ploughs laid down, and the number of houses decayed.

The reports on several of the Midland counties have survived, and have been carefully edited by the late Mr. I. S. Leadam. Professor Gay, who has compared the Report of the Commission of 1517 with one issued in 1607, is inclined to believe that contemporary opinion exaggerated at any rate the extent of the enclosures, and conjectures that the total area enclosed between 1455 and 1607 was only 2·76 per cent. of the whole, or about 500,000 acres. However, despite threatened penalties, the process of enclosure went on, and an Act of 1536 gave the king "the moiety of all lands decayed since the previous statute until the owners should repair or re-erect houses of husbandry." Two years earlier a statute forbade any grazier to have more than 2,000 sheep.

Contemporary Views on Enclosures.—It is indeed certain that the number of sheep in the country increased enormously. Polydore Vergil, an Italian visitor, thought that more Englishmen were occupied in sheep-farming than in tillage, and both poets and theologians protested that England was coming to be inhabited by sheep and deer rather than by men as God intended. Bishop Latimer, himself a yeoman's son, told Edward VI. in a sermon how a shepherd and his dog were now often the sole inhabitants of once populous districts. Sir Thomas More in *Utopia* maintains that the increase of pasture was specially marked in England, and that "sheep, which are naturally mild and easily kept in order, may be said now to devour men and unpeople not only villages but towns." Contemporary opinion was equally hard on the rack-renters, often the new owners of monastic lands, who, as Latimer

pointed out on another occasion, had so raised the rents of their farms that the tenants were in penury and could neither educate their children nor provide themselves with horse and armour for the king's service. Unless the wretched tenant would take a new lease at a higher rate before the old one ran out he had to face the risk of being evicted in favour of a practiser of convertible husbandry, who would add his farm to the many others he already possessed.

Causes of the Rise in Rents.—The rise in rents was the result not merely of the increased practice of sheep-farming and convertible husbandry, but was in part the consequence of the rise in prices that went on steadily throughout the sixteenth century. Mr. Lipson¹ points out that, as much of the land was held as copyhold or leasehold at fixed rents, the landlord's income was bound to diminish in purchasing power, although the tenant might obtain more money for his produce. However, there remained the possibility in most cases of increasing the fines paid on transference of copyholds, and of increasing both fines and rents on renewal of leaseholds. In any case such an increase would seem harsh to the tenant, and probably many of the landlords abused their powers, knowing that they could easily find tenants willing to accept higher rents.

The Debasing of the Coinage.—The rise in prices was due to the debasement of the coinage, which was done shamelessly by Henry VIII. and Edward VI., and later to the fall in the price of silver when the output of the American mines began to flow into Europe. However, land and so the produce of land was rising in value even

¹ See his *Introduction to the Economic History of England*, Vol. I. "The Middle Ages," p. 147 (A. & C. Black, London, 1915).

before Henry VIII. was led by his extravagance to tamper with the coinage. It began as soon as men learnt to look upon land as an investment, and Mr. Lipson quotes a sermon in St. Paul's in which the preacher told the farmers that it was their covetousness of their neighbours' farms that had led them to offer higher rents than they could really pay and so caused their troubles.

The Pilgrimage of Grace and later Risings. — The agrarian revolution undoubtedly helped the more progressive or less scrupulous farmers to make money, but it is not surprising that those who suffered by it were driven at times into rebellion. Even the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536, although it was outwardly against Henry VIII.'s religious changes, had its economic side. Robert Aske, its leader, contrasted the alms and hospitality of the monks with the miserliness of their successors, and his followers were supplied by tenants who had been evicted from their holdings. The "Pilgrims" of 1536 demanded the enforcement of the statutes against enclosures, and that the admission fines to tenants should not exceed two years' rent. Both the revolts under Edward VI. were more or less economic, for even the men of Cornwall and Devon, according to one chronicle, coupled together the religious changes and the enclosures as their grievances. The more serious rebellion of Ket has been already referred to. The demands of the rebels struck an ominous note of social revolution. Its leader was himself lord of the manor of Wymondham, though he followed the occupation of a tanner, and he had influential local backing. His followers did not complain of the conversion of arable land into pasture, but of the monopoly of the waste by the lord as his private sheep-farm. Their remedy was the expropriation of the lord in favour of the classes of copyholders and freeholders, and this middle

class revolution was drowned in blood only by the help of the foreign mercenaries under Warwick which had been raised for the war with Scotland.

Policy of Protector Somerset.—Somerset the Protector, since his own gains from the Church were not threatened, could sympathise with the victims of the nobles whose leader Warwick was his rival. Even before Ket's rebellion he had appointed a Commission of Enquiry in 1548, and it would have been better for both himself and the country if he had backed up with deeds as well as words the leading member, John Hales, the author of the *Discourse of the Common Weal*. Hales was eager to enforce the existing laws even against the most powerful offenders, for he maintained that mere wealth was useless to a nation which had not the man-power to defend it. Unfortunately the men upon whom Somerset relied to enforce the laws—the Justices of the Peace—were themselves often deeply committed to one or other of the various forms of enclosure, and the Protector could not hope to succeed where Wolsey and Henry VIII. had failed. As it was, his sympathy with the oppressed only played into the hands of his less scrupulous rival, and helped to lose him his Protectorship and finally his life. The Commission was fruitless, for the landlords could pack juries and bully their victims into silence, but it is perhaps not too fanciful to suggest that among the readers of Hales' pamphlet and Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* were the wise Queen Elizabeth and her minister Burleigh, who carried out successfully many of the ideas of Hales and More.

2. THE SOCIAL PROBLEM.

Breakdown of the Medieval Social System.—The social problem in all ages is in essentials the same: to find

opportunities of work for the willing, suitable constraint for the unwilling, and discriminating charity for those unable to support themselves, in accordance with the cause of their unfortunate position. However, it was not until the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century that the problem in England became at all serious. Want and misery were of course painfully common in earlier times, but they generally afflicted only the feeble and aged, and the duty of alleviating their misery was one commonly acknowledged by all Christians, if not always fulfilled. No formal poor law was found necessary until the Black Death and similar pestilences threw medieval society into confusion. Even so the State legislated to force men to accept employment at the old rates, as in the case of the Statutes of Labourers, and left the feeble and aged to charity as before.

The Appearance of a Landless Class.—It is perhaps profitless to discuss the question as to how far the monasteries and religious charities generally fulfilled their charitable duties; the evidence is conflicting, but it is undoubted that after the dissolution of the monasteries popular tradition spoke kindly of the monks. However, by the sixteenth century the twin processes of eviction and enclosure had produced a class of landless men who with their families became homeless, and often starving, wanderers. When the lords were forced by Star Chamber fines to dismiss their retainers, the bolder spirits among the workless turned to robbery, and even worse—murder. More in the *Utopia* pointed out, that men, who by inclination or long disuse had become averse from honest labour, would naturally hide their robberies by murdering their victims, since both offences earned the punishment of death. He therefore advocated a more suitable gradation of punishment, and that the State

should prevent eviction and enclosures, and so give the people a chance to live honestly on the land.

The Sturdy Beggars.—However, the disease had spread too widely for any remedy to be immediately efficacious, and the remedies that were applied took the form too commonly of repression. The sturdy beggar who was, when occasion served, also a robber offended the Tudor kings most of all. They did not consider that many of those who were unwilling to work had reached that stage by finding work impossible to obtain. An Act of 1495 made it an offence for any man to beg outside his own district, and an Act of 1531 ordered the justices of the peace to decide the district to which a beggar belonged and to force the able-bodied vagrants to work. Almost immediately afterwards the dissolution of the monasteries aggravated the problem of poverty, for whatever may have been the extent or discretion of monastic charity, the greedy courtiers and grasping merchants who succeeded the monks were not disposed to acknowledge even in theory the claims of the poor.

The Beginnings of the Poor Law.—Henry VIII. recognised the urgency of the problem, and was himself responsible for the statute of 1536, which may be regarded as the parent of the subsequent Elizabethan regulations. He ordered each parish to raise a fund for the relief of the impotent and for the employment of the able-bodied poor. Earlier Acts had failed for the want of such a fund and because of the absence of any provision for the return of vagrants to their native place. Now the vagrant was given a right to relief on production of letters that he was travelling to his native village at the rate of at least ten miles a day. Any parish which failed to provide the necessary relief fund was fined, and any person who gave alms to a beggar instead of subscribing to the poor fund,

which the churchwardens were to collect on Sundays, festivals and holy days, forfeited ten times the amount. Only the *bonâ fide* traveller and, for the few remaining months of their existence, the monasteries were exempted from the Act.

Edwardian Legislation against Vagrancy.—No serious attempt was made to provide for the poor of any class from the spoils of the monasteries, and by the time of Edward VI. the problem had grown serious enough to be referred to by Bishop Ridley in a sermon before the young king. The Government allowed the municipal authorities of London and York, and perhaps elsewhere, to utilise some of the hospitals for the different classes of the poor, but the situation was not improved by the shock administered to working class thrift when the craft guilds were partially¹ disendowed, whatever the strict letter of the process might have been. However, little real appreciation of the problem was shown, for in the first year of Edward VI.'s reign a savage statute threatened slavery to the vagrant class; according to the degree of their offence "loiterers" were to be branded with a V for vagrant or S for slave, and reduced to slavery for a time or for ever. Their children were to be taken away and apprenticed till they reached the age of twenty-four.

Of course such legislation could not be carried out, and in 1550 the old regulations were practically restored. Two years later the system of 1536 was modified by the appointment of two collectors, and any person who refused to subscribe through them to the poor fund was to be exhorted first by the parson, or if obdurate by the bishop, "as best he might." Even this veiled threat of excom-

¹ In theory the guilds were only deprived of such funds as were devoted to "superstitious" uses.

munication seems to have failed, for we find that Mary frankly admitted that begging could not be put down by mere legislation. She indeed tried to introduce a system of semi-voluntary weekly subscriptions in 1555, but she allowed beggars to obtain licenses and badges and beg outside their own parish when it could not relieve them.

Early Poor Law Legislation of Elizabeth.—Almost from the beginning of her reign Elizabeth attacked the problem in the light of the experience of her predecessors. Her policy is best described as one of transferring the duty of administering the poor law from the ecclesiastical to the civil officials, and of supervising the actions of the overseers and justices of the peace through the Privy Council. In 1563 the Statute of Apprentices or Artificers was an attempt to remove the main cause of poverty—unemployment—and provided for the absorption of the unemployed by agriculture. In the same year the justices of the peace were given the power to lay a weekly assessment on such as would not voluntarily contribute to the poor fund on the bishop's invitation, and in 1572 a further statute ordered the mayors in towns and the justices elsewhere to assess every householder at a definite sum for poor relief. Under this Act collectors were appointed by the justices to gather in the rate, and overseers to dispense to the poor the funds thus collected. Four years later the Act of 1576 dealt with the able-bodied poor; the justices were ordered to see that all corporate and market towns should supply a stock of wool, flax, hemp, etc., which the able-bodied poor had to spin and weave under supervision, and those who refused were to be sent to a House of Correction.

The Great Poor Law of 1601.—These various Elizabethan statutes were codified with such amendments of detail as experience suggested in 1597, and this code

slightly altered by the Act of 1601 became the basis of the Old Poor Law.¹ Henceforth every parish in its vestry, the sole remaining organ of local self-government, had to pass a local rate on the proposition of the churchwardens. This rate was to be collected by overseers appointed by the justices, and dispensed by them in relieving the poor. The impotent poor were to be helped as kindly as possible, and those able and willing to work were to be found suitable employment as provided for by the Act of 1576. However, the "sturdy beggar" or any adult who refused to work was to be imprisoned and burnt in the ear unless he could find some charitable person willing to guarantee him employment for a year.

Work of the Privy Council.—So long as the Privy Council retained its power over the local authorities the old Poor Law worked well, for the central authority not only allowed a reasonable elasticity in the details of administration, but was not backward with either praise or blame. However, it was only by degrees that the economic system of England improved, so as to bring the problem of poverty within reasonable compass. From the beginning of Elizabeth's reign the Privy Council had issued "general orders" at critical times; for example, when the failure of the "Rising of the North" (1569) and the consequent disbandment of the rebel army produced a plague of tramps, the Council ordered vagrants to be whipped, and conferred additional powers on magistrates by the Act of 1572. With calculated ruthlessness the Act ordered first offenders to be whipped and branded and to be convicted as felons for a second offence; if an

¹ Actually, the Act of 1601 was at first only a temporary measure, but was finally made permanent by the Statute 16 Charles I. cap. 4.

offender was still found unwilling to work he was hanged.

It is only fair to add that, as will be shown shortly, the Council were taking steps to provide that no man need beg who was able and willing to work. However, the unemployed were only slowly re-absorbed into industry, but it is almost incredible that the contemporary observer should be correct who estimates that the number of beggars had increased a hundredfold between 1509 and 1591; hardly more credible is his statement that 8,000 beggars received a dole when the Earl of Shrewsbury was buried at Sheffield in 1591, and that there were over 20,000 "poor people" residing within thirty miles of that town.

Re-organisation of the Industrial System.—Parallel with Tudor poor law legislation ran their attempt to re-organise the industrial system of the country on the lines of centralised control. On the one hand a statute of 1504 gave the various craft guilds of pewterers and brasiers complete "right of search" over all men of their particular trade in the towns, while the justices were to act as "searchers" outside the corporate towns, and the standard of the London guild was insisted upon. On the other hand a later statute of 1504 decreed that the ordinances of the guilds must obtain the approval of the royal judges. Having been thus brought under the control of the Government, the craft guilds became convenient agents for administrative purposes and were organised where they were not already in existence, but their independence was gone. The meaning of the new system was shown by the statute of 1549, which ordered the dissolution of any victualling guild which was found guilty of a combination to raise prices. Actually the independence of the guilds had been dying in many places before the Tudors actively interfered; for example, the York guilds ceased to exercise

coercive powers after 1519 and only appeared as assessors to the mayor in trade disputes.

The Alien Craftsmen.—Another problem which the Tudors had to solve, even before the influx of religious refugees, was the position of the alien craftsmen. The aliens were most unpopular, and the strongly national Tudors were quite willing to protect native interests. In London the unruly apprentices, stirred up by a fiery preacher at the Spital, brought matters to a head on "Evil May Day," 1517, when they grievously mishandled some of the foreign residents. The king punished the rioters, but the native craftsmen gained the Act of 1523, which forbade aliens to employ more than two journeymen or to take alien apprentices; moreover the craft guilds, or failing them the borough authorities, were given the right to "search, view and reform" the aliens at their work both in London and other corporate towns.

Decay of the Craft Guilds.—The position of the craft guilds in the sixteenth century was being adversely affected by the growth of capitalistic manufacture, and the departure of the workmen from the towns to the country districts. The Tudors deplored this migration because it weakened the boroughs and rendered them in some cases unable to pay the *firma burgi* or their share of the subsidies and other taxes, but the greedy and short-sighted spirit of monopoly shown by the craft guilds was largely to blame. An Act of 1531 fixed the apprenticeship fee at half a crown and the fee payable at the end of apprenticeship at three shillings and fourpence. Five years later another Act forbade the guilds to continue the practice of binding apprentices out of their time not to open a shop or work at their trade in the town without the permission of their late master or the craft guild. The king recognised that the workmen thus oppressed had taken the

natural step of carrying on their trade in the surrounding villages under the Domestic System.¹ Their cheaper if sometimes less well-finished products easily undersold those of the townsmen, especially in the textile trades, and the royal policy was at once to check the Domestic System and to enable those who had been driven to live under it to find it possible to practise their crafts in the towns.

The Capitalist Clothiers.—Even more serious was the effect of the growth of capitalistic production on the fortunes of the old guild system. It appeared early in the cloth trade, and John Kempe, the Fleming invited over by Edward III., had many native copyists in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was a tradition in the West Riding of Yorkshire that Henry VII. had secretly introduced foreign weavers to teach his subjects. The export of wool and white ashes was forbidden for the benefit of the home trade by an Act of 1488, but by 1550 the Government was merely allowing the craft guilds of the cloth-workers to help the municipal authorities in carrying out the trade regulations, while two years later the execution of the important Act of that year was confided to the municipal authorities only.

Jack of Newbury.—The probable reason for this treatment of the guilds is that they had actually in practice ceased to exercise any real control over the industry in some places. A well-known sixteenth-century ballad describes the factory of Jack (Winchcomb) of Newbury, who died in 1519 :—

“ Within one roome being large and long,
There stood two hundred Loomes full strong ;
Two hundred men, the truth is so,
Wrought in these Loomes, all in a row.”

¹ See *ante*, p. 86.

Each weaver was aided by a "pretty boy." Jack also employed a hundred women in carding, two hundred maidens in spinning, and a hundred and fifty children in sorting the wool; there were also fifty shearmen, eighty rowers, forty men in the dye-house and twenty people in the fulling mill. Another rich clothier of a somewhat later date, William Stumpe, set up factories in the buildings of the dissolved abbeys of Malmesbury and Osney, and the names of several others have come down to us.

Vain Opposition by the Guilds.—The guilds had vainly tried to prevent rich "clothiers," as they were called, from setting up a number of looms under their own control, and an Act of 1555 attempted to do no more than forbid the spread of the system to the country districts, on the ground that it led to the oppression of the domestic weavers by the rich clothiers. The author of *England's Commercial Policy* complains of the evils of a new system of "truck," or payment partly in kind, as early as the first half of the fifteenth century, and Henry VIII. passed an Act against the practice in 1512. Later in the century we find the Coventry clothiers¹ making a corner in woollen yarn, while at Reading the Privy Council allowed them to dye their own wool, in each case to the detriment of the craft guilds concerned. The shearmen and fullers were more successful in opposing the attempts of capitalists to introduce the use of machinery in these particular crafts during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Introduction of New Manufactures.—However, little objection can be taken to some aspects of capitalistic enterprise, especially the introduction of new manufactures. For example, in 1555 the mayor of Norwich, together

¹ The "clothier" was a capitalist who supplied the "domestic" weavers with the wool which they wove into cloth for him.

with six aldermen and six other merchants, obtained an Act of Parliament forming them into a company or guild, of which the object was to introduce the art of weaving fustians and russets formerly imported from Naples. They were allowed to regulate the manufacture and choose wardens to search for defective goods. At Bristol, similarly, merchants formed a company to discover and open up fresh markets beyond the western ocean, while London merchants were responsible for the Muscovy, Eastland, Turkey, and finally the East India Company. Burleigh and Elizabeth frankly accepted capitalism, but strove to turn both it and the older guild system to the national advantage. Capitalism alone could develop industry to the degree demanded if England was to become a nation manufacturing for export; it was clear that only by such an industrial system could England sustain in comfort her growing population.

Partial Disendowment of the Guilds under Edward VI.

—It is sometimes supposed that the craft guilds received their death-blow by the Act of 1547, on the ground that by it their old endowments were confiscated by the king. Actually, however, the only endowments confiscated were those devoted to "superstitious uses." Indirectly the statute undoubtedly had an injurious effect on the guilds, for by abolishing their corporate worship it struck a blow at their corporate feeling, already decaying from other causes, and it perhaps caused a certain loss of prestige. It is not likely that the commissioners erred on the side of leniency by deciding doubtful cases against the king's interest.

Amalgamation of the Smaller Guilds.—Mr. Lipson argues that the guilds suffered more from the operation of economic forces than from actual legislation. He classifies these forces under the three heads of (1) amalga-

tion of the smaller crafts, (2) the rise of the livery company, and (3) the growth of mercantile societies. The amalgamation was often due to poverty and scanty numbers, and in the grouped guild one set of craftsmen was sometimes able to reduce the other crafts of the group to the condition of dependent employees, as the drapers—who sold cloth—came to control the weavers, dyers, and other once independent crafts who produced the cloth.

The Livery Companies.—The livery companies began to appear in the fourteenth century, and were so favoured by the kings that in 1411 a statute against maintenance and livery allowed the members of crafts to wear livery or special dress even when the practice was forbidden to the retainers of the great nobles. However, from the first appearance of the custom of wearing livery, only the richer companies, especially those of London, could afford the special dress which was originally introduced to emphasise the spirit of brotherhood, and the livery companies soon distinguished themselves from the less wealthy crafts by obtaining charters of incorporation. They obtained these charters, which were practically grants of monopoly, by gifts of money to the kings, especially to Edward III., and these crafts naturally fell under the control of the richer members.

The Yeomanry Guilds.—By the sixteenth century the government of the livery company had become an oligarchy, consisting of the master, two or more wardens, and a court of assistants, originally perhaps in theory the more experienced members of the craft. The unfortunate manual workers—the yeomanry—were gradually deprived of any real share in managing the companies, and when they began to form “trade unions” to improve labour conditions as to hours, prices, and the demarcation of the different processes they were savagely interdicted by a

statute of 1548. The yeomanry guilds of the earlier time had anticipated the tactics of the modern trade unions and the "masters" had retaliated upon strikers with the black list and the lock-out, but during the latter half of the sixteenth century such guilds had become largely dependent on the livery company of the particular craft. Before the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century it was comparatively easy for a clever journeyman to rise to be a small master, and in consequence of this constant drain of the more energetic members the yeomanry guilds became more and more powerless and the gap between the workman and his employer increased.

The Mercantile Companies.—The third factor in the decay of the guilds was the rise of the purely mercantile crafts whose members were not manual workers but merely dealers in the product of other men's labour. Such capitalist dealers were sharing in the government of London as early as 1312 and during the fourteenth century we can trace the organisation of such companies as the drapers, grocers, and mercers. These mercantile companies also appeared outside London, especially in the sixteenth century. The Merchant Adventurers of Newcastle procured a decree of the Star Chamber in 1516 which forbade craftsmen to sell any wares not of their own manufacture unless they first renounced their craft, but at Exeter and Bristol for example the merchants only maintained their monopoly of the foreign trade. As the foreign trade of England became more important the prestige of the mercantile crafts and the kindred chartered companies grew at the expense of that of the older guilds of manual workers.

The Statute of Artificers or Apprentices, 1563.—Elizabeth attempted to deal with the industrial problem as a whole in 1563 by the Statute of Artificers or Apprentices. It professed merely to codify existing legislation, but it

silently abandoned such regulations as experience had proved to be unworkable, and its own scheme was for the times fairly flexible. Its object was to guard against the decay of the corporate towns by favouring them at the expense of the market towns and the country districts where the domestic system of industry was absorbing peasants, whose services would be more valuable to the nation on the land. These domestic workers often turned out badly finished goods; they were not organised in guilds, and in some parts of the country were working for capitalist employers. In any case they ran counter to the royal scheme of regulation; industry was to be concentrated in the corporate towns, where it could be controlled, while the country people and unskilled workers generally were to increase the food supply of the nation as much as possible.

To discourage vagrancy and irregularity of employment farm servants and artisans generally, with the exception of those engaged in the building or similar trades, were to be employed by yearly engagements. On changing their situations they had to present testimonials as to character from the old to the new employer, and every man could be compelled to serve in husbandry unless he could prove that he had undergone a seven years' apprenticeship to a specific trade. The apprentice, whether in a corporate town or not, could not become a journeyman till he was 24 years of age, and the trade to which a youth might be apprenticed was determined by his parentage and circumstances.

Partial Success of the Apprenticeship Clauses.—The statute of 1563 was certainly successful in arresting the decay of the older towns, and although it did not prevent the development of capitalistic industry, it did provide a defence for the native workers against the more highly developed skill of the immigrants from France and Flanders. These Huguenots and Walloons were "practically

compelled to settle as industrial colonists under special conditions," for they could not qualify for the freedom of their craft by a seven years' apprenticeship. Until the Revolution of 1688 such complaints as were made were rather against the relaxation than the enforcement of the provisions of the Act. Dr. Cunningham maintains that it was with a view to enforcing the apprenticeship clauses that Elizabeth favoured the resuscitation of the old and the creation of new industrial companies towards the end of her reign. However, it must be noted that these companies were as a rule bodies of capitalists with powers emanating directly (or indirectly through the municipality) from Parliament or the Crown, and were merely "local agents for carrying out a national industrial policy."

The Regulation of Wages by Justices of the Peace.—Elizabeth also included in the Act of 1563 interesting provisions for the regulation of wages by the justices of the peace, who were empowered to fix the wages for the different craftsmen, and to enforce such rates on both employers and employed. Regulation of wages had been provided for by the various statutes of labourers and the justices had been employed on the work since 1389. However, until the Act of 1563 all efforts had been directed towards fixing a statutory *maximum*. Elizabeth on the contrary, although she allowed the justices to fix the winter wage at a lower rate than that paid in the summer and to discriminate somewhat according to the ability of the craftsman, distinctly abolished the idea of a maximum line in favour of a rate of payment which should allow the worker to enjoy a standard of comfort suitable to his station in life.

Criticism of the System.—Professor Thorold Rogers is inclined to doubt the philanthropic motives behind Elizabeth's action, but the queen and her great minister Burleigh were shrewd enough to see that such legislation was

necessary if the social problem was to be successfully treated, and recent investigations have conclusively proved that "the statute was not used as an engine of oppression." Until 1598 the rates suggested by the justices were certified in Chancery and enforced by royal proclamation, and it is probable that as the influence of the Privy Council decayed under the Stuarts the system of regulating wages worked less well, until it collapsed during the Civil War. From the point of view of the economist it is perhaps permissible to maintain that the system of regulation, either of wages or of prices, or of both at the same time, is only feasible as a temporary expedient, but it is important to remember that the Elizabethan policy throughout postulated the constant and watchful actions of a Privy Council which fulfilled the part of a national conscience now taken by a free press and a more or less educated public opinion. Modern social legislation aims, with more advantages if not with greater success, at the same object of easing the struggle for existence.

3. BURLEIGH, GRESHAM, AND THE BEGINNINGS OF MERCANTILISM.

Character of Burleigh.—Burleigh's task was to rebuild a bankrupt state, so that it could eventually resist the interference of Philip II. of Spain independently of foreign aid. He had many qualifications for his position as Elizabeth's adviser. He was not a bigoted partisan in religion, but probably leaned as much to the Protestant as the queen did to the Catholic view. He was not simply a politician; he was an economist also, with a genius for detailed carefulness which had served him well as a Secretary of State under Edward VI., and had even

caused him to be consulted by Mary Tudor, although his main work during her reign had been the management of the private estates of the Princess Elizabeth. Elizabeth on her accession reinstated him as Secretary, and from 1572 to 1598, that is until his death, he acted as Lord Treasurer.

His Economic Policy.—He was one of the very few incorruptible servants she had, and he was almost as cautious as his mistress. Every step was carefully thought out in advance, and he seldom misread the signs of the times. He was a firm believer in the doctrine that "defence is of more importance than opulence," and he was the first English statesman seriously to attempt to establish the economic system known as "mercantilism," not as a temporary expedient but as a definite national policy. However, Burleigh was not an orthodox mercantilist except in his objects; in his methods he was frankly an opportunist who knew how to take advantage of the peculiar circumstances of the time. He was a mercantilist in that he sought "power" so as to enable the nation to defend itself against its many foes. He cared as little as Richelieu or Strafford for private interests when he conceived them to be in conflict with the national welfare, but his interpretation of the national welfare was far wider than that of Richelieu, and he was more fortunate in his opportunities than Strafford.

Objects of the Mercantile System.—The Mercantile System can be divided into the three main objects of "the accumulation of treasure, the development of shipping, and the maintenance of an effective population." As will be shown later, there was always a danger that treasure should be interpreted only in terms of gold and silver, especially in a land like England which had no mines of precious metals. Cecil was wiser than his Spanish rival,

and understood that there were other ways of accumulating treasure than by hoarding gold and silver, and he proposed to foster industry and commerce at home; surplus goods could be exported for gold and silver, but he proposed also to manufacture gunpowder and arms and to build up a native marine, instead of buying or hiring such indispensable defences from foreigners, as Philip II. was wont to do. One of the first things Burleigh undertook was the manufacture of guns and gunpowder in England. He introduced foreign, principally German, artisans into England to teach Englishmen the art, and before the end of the reign English ordnance was so famous that the Spaniards themselves tried to purchase it. The actual supply of precious metals in England was increased by the piratical captures of Hawkins, Drake, and their imitators, thanks to the superiority of their naval guns, which also went far to bring about the defeat of the Armada in 1588.

Early Navigation Acts.—From the time of Richard II. kings and statesmen had paid special attention to English shipping and had endeavoured to build up a strong native mercantile marine, so that the Government should be sure of men and ships to meet possible invaders at sea. The favourite method of the procedure was to pass Navigation Acts which either forbade foreign vessels to trade with English ports or penalised such as employed them by a higher duty. In practice such legislation was modified because there were not enough ships to satisfy the growing trade, and also because foreign nations naturally retaliated. A statute of the first year of Elizabeth had placed discriminating duties on the cargoes of foreign ships, but Burleigh was not a believer in the system of the Navigation Acts. He realised that retaliation by foreigners was only to be expected, and so he

relied on other methods for the encouragement of shipping, while at the same time he frankly faced the fact that English trade with rival industrial nations was not likely to increase to any great extent.

Burleigh's Encouragement of Ship-building.—In the sixteenth century there was no sharp distinction between war-ships and merchant ships. Burleigh desired to encourage ship-building by making possible profitable voyages to new markets, but he realised that fishermen were the best recruits for the navy. He therefore attempted to revive the fishing industry, which had languished since the growth of Protestantism and the consequent neglect of fast-days had led to a fall in the demand for fish. Burleigh attempted with some success to enforce by legislation the custom of fish-eating on certain days of the week, with the double object of finding employment for fishermen and of diminishing the slaughter of cattle, which threatened to produce a meat famine in the near future. Moreover he discouraged the use of timber for smelting or fuel in the hope of cheapening the cost of new ships, and he encouraged the growth of flax and hemp and similar materials used for ropes and sails. Fishermen were not to be impressed as soldiers.

Burleigh's Trade Policy.—Burleigh was too far-seeing to think that piracy by itself would help him to build up a native marine, and he was eager to extend foreign trade as likely to be more profitable. He carefully argued with himself as to the desirability of the various foreign markets from a national standpoint, and he unsparingly condemned the wine trade with Bordeaux. He held the doctrine of the Balance of Trade—that when imports exceeded exports in value the balance had to be paid in gold or silver, and as in those days we had no "invisible exports" in the form of foreign investments and the

earnings of our mercantile marine, his fear of indebtedness was not fanciful.

Burleigh wished to diminish the importation of foreign luxuries such as wine, spices and silk, as being the chief cause of the drain of gold. Moreover he disliked the Bordeaux trade, not only because it enriched France, who insisted on being paid in gold which we got in return for wool exported to the Low Countries or Spain, but because it directly harmed England. Wine led to drunkenness by persons who would be better employed in producing wealth by industry. Moreover, people preferred wine to ale and beer, and this preference diminished the demand for grain and caused the decay of tillage. Luxury both in food and clothing and also in household arrangements was increasing rapidly in sixteenth-century England, as we are often told by contemporaries. The Spaniards were especially struck with the comfort of the middle classes. Burleigh preferred that the queen's subjects should save their money for use in foreign trade. He intended that the Government should enter into partnership with the merchants for the benefit of the nation as a whole.

Economic Importance of Henry VII.'s Reign.—Henry VII. had laid the foundation of many of Burleigh's schemes when, as Bacon says, "he bowed the ancient policy of this realm from consideration of plenty to consideration of power." He had encouraged John Cabot the explorer, and the Newfoundland fisheries and the later English settlements on the American seaboard were the ultimate results. Henry VII. had also made commercial treaties with the neighbouring European states and had even secured from Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain permission for English merchants to trade freely in their dominions. He was willing to forget Burgundy's support of Perkin Warbeck, which for the moment had led to the expulsion of the

Flemings and the withdrawal of the Merchant Adventurers from Antwerp to Calais, and by the *Magnus Intercursus* of 1496 he had arranged that the Merchant Adventurers should return to Antwerp with permission to sell their cloth in any part of the Netherlands except Flanders. In 1506, when the Archduke Philip fell into his hands during a storm, he wrested from him the *Malus Intercursus*, which allowed Englishmen to sell their cloth either by wholesale or by retail even in Flanders. Philip died next year and Henry had to agree to abandon the right to retail trade.

Struggles with the Hanseatic League and Venice.—Neither the Hanseatic League nor the Venetians were pleased when Englishmen began to appear as merchants in the Baltic and the Mediterranean. The Hanseatic League however were able to use the dynastic troubles of Henry VII. to foil his schemes, and even forced him to grant them all their old privileges by an Act of 1504. The Venetians were less fortunate, for, as they were largely dependent on English wool, they had to abandon under threat of retaliation their attempt to strangle the English wine trade by high tariff dues. Both Henry VII. and Henry VIII. carried on the policy of the Navigation Acts, but Burleigh recognised that the actual advantages were hardly commensurate with the drawbacks.

Alliance between the Crown and the Merchant Adventurers.—The Hanseatic League retained their privileges during Henry VIII.'s reign, but the League was decaying and the Merchant Adventurers in 1551 induced the Privy Council to abrogate the Hansards' special privileges in England. Mary Tudor who was in the debt of the Hansards, was persuaded to restore them, but the League had an implacable foe in the person of Sir Thomas Gresham, who had been the agent of the English Crown at Antwerp in Edward VI.'s reign, and had formed the plan of undoing

the Hanseatic League by an alliance of the new Queen Elizabeth and the Merchant Adventurers. Gresham had won over the support of Burleigh and had taken a leading part in carrying out the re-coinage of English money early in Elizabeth's reign, which helped to give English commerce a chance to prosper.

Elizabeth Expels the Hansards from England.—Earlier sovereigns had borrowed money from foreign merchants and found them hard taskmasters. Gresham, however, was most useful in negotiating loans with the London merchants who were interested in the prosperity of the Merchant Adventurers. Philip II. of Spain, who in many ways anticipated Napoleon's schemes for excluding English traders from the Continent, openly championed the cause of the Hanseatic League, and the Adventurers had to transfer their headquarters from Antwerp to Hamburg. The troubles in the Netherlands were a great help to the English merchants in the long run, but the Hansa merchants were able to drive the Adventurers from Hamburg in 1578. Elizabeth naturally retaliated by depriving the Hansards of their special privileges in England, and also chartered the Prussian or Eastland Company to be fresh rivals in the Baltic trade. Moreover, she gave the Merchant Adventurers a new charter and a better organisation. The Hansards took a prominent part in fitting out the Spanish Armada, but they paid a heavy penalty when in 1597 Elizabeth withdrew the charter of the Steelyard—their London factory—and so ended their career in England.

Rise of the English Trading Companies.—Another unpopular set of monopolists were the Venetian merchants, whose state fleet touched at Southampton on its voyage to Northern Europe with imported Eastern products such as silks and spices. At the suggestion of the London merchants Elizabeth sent an emissary to the Sultan of Turkey

and in 1581 chartered the famous Levant or Turkey Company, which arranged an overland trade with India, and by 1584 English merchants reached Goa on the Malabar coast. The Portuguese and the Dutch were also helping to break the Venetian monopoly by using the sea route which Vasco da Gama had discovered in 1497. In 1587 the Venetian "argosies" were wrecked off the Needles, and as competition had become so keen no further fleet was sent by Venice. London had gained immensely by the new Eastern trade, and at the end of 1600 a number of London merchants were chartered by Elizabeth as the East India Company, largely because the Dutch had unreasonably increased the price of pepper. Two other companies that deserve mention are the Muscovy Company and the Barbary Company. The former had been chartered by Mary to trade with Russia *viâ* Archangel after the discovery of the North-east Passage by Chancellor and Willoughby. Elizabeth had favoured it, but its brilliant prospects were ruined partly because the Tsar Ivan the Terrible withdrew his favour when Elizabeth refused to marry him, and partly because of the internal troubles of Russia on Ivan's death. The Barbary Company attempted to trade with the states of North Africa, but it was unable to overcome the hostility of fanatics, pirates, and Spaniards.

Patents and Monopolies.—Burleigh favoured the new companies because he saw in them the means of vending in foreign markets the products of the new industries he was introducing into England with the double object of increasing the national wealth and of finding profitable employment for the queen's subjects. The keynote of Burleigh's mercantilism was his decision only to "protect" such industries as were necessary or suitable to the country. His fostering of the manufacture of gunpowder

and ordnance has already been referred to. In 1563 a German, Gasper Seelar, was given a patent to manufacture common salt, which had hitherto been largely imported. Similarly in 1581 alum workers were imported from Italy for the benefit of the cloth trade and the damage of the "Bishop of Rome," from whose dominions alum had formerly been imported. When, as in the case of glass in 1567, the home manufacture was insufficient, or of unsuitable character, Burleigh granted a patent for twenty-one years, but, despite special pleading, he refused to grant a patent for manufacturing sugar, because it might result in a burdensome monopoly.

The Planting of New Industries.—The planting of these new industries was carried out through more or less wealthy capitalists who were able to wait for their gains; and with very little expense to the treasury Burleigh introduced valuable sources of wealth and employment. When Burleigh saw that a grant was abused he promptly interfered, but it was impossible for him to prevent all abuse. However, he did not confine himself to patentees, but welcomed the refugee artisans who flocked into England to escape the persecutions of fanatical rulers. Pre-Reformation immigrants, such as the Flemings under Edward III., had settled in England from economic motives, but from the time of Edward VI., when Somerset allowed Walloon weavers to settle at Glastonbury and German Protestants to gather round the Austin Friars' Church in London, with a brief interruption under Mary, a steady stream of religious refugees flowed into England. It is characteristic of Burleigh that he scattered the newcomers over the whole country, partly to render them less offensive to the ambassador of Philip II. and partly that all sections of the country might benefit by the new industries they could teach.

Position of the Alien Immigrants.—Burleigh's main difficulty was to fit the newcomers into the "ecclesiastical, industrial, and eleemosynary system" that he was organising. However, the aliens soon became self-supporting, and the religious difficulty did not cause much trouble outside Canterbury, London and Norwich, where Elizabeth tolerated semi-independent congregations. Elsewhere the immigrants or their children gradually conformed to the National Church or died out. The industrial difficulty was more serious, and in less able hands might have proved insoluble. Neither the customs of the realm nor the Statute of Artificers were favourable to the prosperity of the newcomers.

The guilds claimed the right to supervise the work of aliens, even if they did not, as at Norwich, order aliens to sell "wholesale" only and to live with definite "hosts," who were to be held responsible for them. "Evil May Day" was repeated in 1586, but, although the aliens were often unpopular, Burleigh and the queen relaxed the usual regulations as far as they safely could without quarrelling with Parliament. In time their general good behaviour and the increased prosperity they brought caused the unpopularity of the aliens to abate, especially as Burleigh took care that they taught their crafts to English apprentices.

The New Drapery.—The chief work of the aliens was the planting of the "new drapery," that is the weaving of the finer kinds of woollen cloths, such as worsteds, serges, and baize. Norwich, nearly ruined by Ket's rebellion, and Colchester both prospered exceedingly through the new industries. Probably the cotton industry of Manchester and district took its rise owing to the settlement there of immigrants from Antwerp, once the great seat of the industry. Similarly we can, perhaps, trace to the aliens the brass-

making industries of Birmingham, for in Henry VIII.'s time only iron-working was carried on there. Maidstone became the centre for thread-making, Canterbury for silk-weaving, probably thanks to the Huguenots or French Protestants, who were perhaps also the founders of the lace-making in Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire and of the potteries around London. Within a hundred years of the coming of the refugees the manufactures of glass, paper, needles and cutlery are all to be found localised in different towns.

Success of Elizabeth and Burleigh.—By the end of Elizabeth's reign, thanks to the policy of Burleigh which had created an industrial population demanding food, pasture was no longer more profitable than tillage. Poverty of course was not wholly banished, but the problem had resumed manageable proportions. The wealth of the nation had increased with the growth of native industry, and a thriving foreign trade had been secured by the sea power which had been proved in defeating the Armada. However, Burleigh's system postulated an able government and a submissive people with confidence in their rulers. Unfortunately the ability of the early Stuarts fell far short of their good intentions, even if the growth of Calvinism had not engendered a spirit of individualism which could not submit to any system of "well-ordered trade." The plea of the common good had far less weight in checking selfish desire for personal gain when the incapacity of the sovereign made the drawbacks of mercantilism more conspicuous than its advantages.

CHAPTER V.

THE MERCANTILE SYSTEM. PHASE I.— ROYAL CONTROL.

1. ENGLAND UNDER JAMES I.

As the personal wishes of the king were so potent during the years 1603 to 1688, the social history of this period is perhaps best considered under the head of the various reigns.

Policy of James I.—James I. was in full sympathy with the ideals of Burleigh and Queen Elizabeth, but unfortunately he lacked their native ability and he was not equally favoured by the political situation abroad. No one doubts now the wisdom of his preference for peaceful national development, although a continuance of the war with Spain might have benefited certain sections of Englishmen at the expense of the rest. Moreover, there was no real difference between James and his subjects as to the necessity for a mercantilist policy, although a strong party both within and without the House of Commons challenged some of the methods by which that policy was carried out.

Poverty of the King.—The root of all the king's difficulties was the question of finance. The value of money, and so the real income of the Government, continued to

fall. Elizabeth had left debts behind her despite her considerable financial ingenuity, and James I., as a married man with a tendency to thoughtless generosity and an extravagant Court and family, could never make ends meet. He was eager to foster trade so that his receipts from the customs duties might be increased, but his "chronic impecuniosity" did not always allow him to recognise that schemes which might temporarily increase his own income might not in the long run be equally advantageous to the kingdom. Herein lay the chief difference between the economic policy of Burleigh and James I., and a Parliament which had successfully challenged Elizabeth's right to grant monopolies in 1601 would naturally dispute the claim of the new king to regulate the national industrial system to his own advantage if that regulation seemed to them contrary to the nation's interest.

The "Free Trade" Bills.—In 1604 three-fourths of the London merchants were opposed to the monopolies granted by Elizabeth to the chartered companies, of which the Merchant Adventurers seem to have been the most unpopular. A committee of the House of Commons in that year proposed that entrance to the companies should be facilitated and certain abuses remedied, but "Free Trade" Bills were introduced into the House of Commons, and only the resistance of the House of Lords saved the companies.

James I. and the Merchant Adventurers.—Perhaps this hostility to the companies encouraged James I. in 1614 to abrogate the charter of the Merchant Adventurers and found a new company. He was desirous of finding employment for his subjects by planting the trades of dyeing and dressing cloth in England, and he did succeed in founding an alum-mining industry in Yorkshire which

helped these trades. However, the new company, unlike the old, was not allowed to export undyed and unfinished cloth to be worked up in Holland, and the Dutch not only refused to buy English finished cloth but even developed a rival weaving industry. James had to re-establish the old company in 1617, but complaints were made that the indifference of the London merchants to the interests of the West of England led to the serious trade depression of 1621-1623. It should be remembered for good to King James I. that his Privy Council in 1622 issued this order: "This being the rule by which the wool-grower, the clothier, and merchant must be governed; That whoever had a part of the gain in profitable times, since His Majesty's happy reign, must now in the decay of trade . . . bear a part of the public losses as may best conduce to the good of the public and the maintenance of the general trade."

Advantages of "well-ordered" Trade.—It was a good part of the mercantile system that forced the merchants to keep the workers employed even if they had no immediate market for the cloth; but undoubtedly, as Burleigh realised, the true vent for English manufactures was not in the older markets of Europe, but in the new lands beyond the seas. James I. attempted not only to increase the amount and diversity of English manufactures, but he also insisted on the maintenance of the system by which the actual manufacture of the articles was supervised by royal or guild officials. The king and the authorities of the various companies believed that it was more advantageous to have trade carried on in a definite "well-ordered" way through persons from whom might be exacted guarantees for the observance of the regulations and the payment of the king's customs. It was certainly easier for the merchants of a chartered company to

acquire from semi-civilised potentates the right to trade in their dominions than for individual merchants to open up new markets, where they were often able neither to secure payment of their debts nor give satisfactory guarantees of their own good behaviour.

Bate's Case.—Unfortunately James I. very often attempted to obtain praiseworthy ends by methods of doubtful wisdom, although his use of the royal prerogative to control foreign trade did not always deserve, at least on historical grounds, the harsh criticism it has met with from Whig historians such as Hallam. Mr. Hall, in his *History of the Customs Revenue of England*, has shown that the judges in the case of Bate, the Turkey merchant, did not wrest the law in the king's favour by sanctioning his right to levy impositions or extra duties on certain goods over and above the ordinary rates of tunnage and poundage. Such extra duties had been sanctioned in Henry VII.'s reign as a measure of retaliation against the Venetians, and Mr. Hall points out that not only were some of the king's parliamentary critics guilty of ignorance or worse, but that so far from being an increasing burden on trade the new impositions levied by James must have penalised the trade with the Venetians, as their yield to the Treasury actually decreased in value.

Virginia.—James's attitude towards the settlement of Virginia is an example of his good intentions if not of his wisdom. He was certainly well disposed towards the venture, and the early ill-success of the company was not due to the king, who warned the settlers that they were unwise to devote their attention solely to the cultivation of tobacco. James went even further: at a time when he needed all the revenue he could obtain, he actually sacrificed the revenue from Spanish imported tobacco and

risked his good relations with Spain by granting a substantial preference to Virginian tobaccos. Only when he found that his richer subjects insisted on Spanish tobacco did he allow the limited importation of the latter as a Government monopoly, in order that his sacrifice of revenue in the interests of Virginia should not be wholly in vain.

Colonial Policy of James I.—Apparently James had originally intended that the Royal Council of Virginia of 1606 should be a Privy Council for colonial purposes, for no one had as yet conceived the idea of “complete popular government” for the colonies. His favour to the colony was shown in the teeth of bitter Spanish opposition, and it is at least as likely that when he took the colony under direct royal control in 1623 he did so to save it from being ruined by the internal quarrels of the Company as that he acted out of complaisance to Spain. James could not be expected actively to favour the Pilgrim Fathers who sailed to New Plymouth in the “Mayflower” in 1620, but he agreed to connive at their religion and allowed them to obtain a patent for their lands from his original grantees, the Plymouth Company.

James I. and Foreign Trade.—There was considerable shrewdness shown by James in his dealings with Spain, although his policy might not seem heroic to those who remembered “the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth.” Actually James took advantage of the war between the Protestant Netherlands and Spain to make a favourable treaty with Philip III. which gave English merchants practically a monopoly of the trade with Spain and a substantial share of that with the Spanish Indies and the Spanish Netherlands. This trade was really far more profitable than the old buccaneering, and James’s plan of marrying his son to a Spanish princess was balanced by

his other plan to marry his daughter to a German Protestant prince and obtain similar privileges in Germany. The failure of the Hanseatic League (largely due to the political developments in Scandinavia) and the troubles in the Netherlands offered English trade a promising opening, but the outbreak of the 'Thirty Years' War in 1618 caused the ruin of both the foreign and the commercial policy of James I.

James was certainly as eager as Elizabeth to increase England's foreign trade. He joined with the Dutch and the Hanse Towns in 1613 in a successful protest against the attempt of the Danes to raise the tolls of the Sound—the gate of the Baltic trade. In 1621 he insisted on the right of the inhabitants of the more important English seaports to deal in the "new draperies" at the marts of the Merchant Adventurers. We also find him insisting on the enforcement of the existing Navigation Acts in the trade with the Levant, France, Virginia, and the Somers Islands.

The East India Company and the Dutch.—His interference on behalf of the East India Company in their struggle with the Dutch for the trade of the Moluccas or Spice Islands was unsuccessful. James was dissatisfied with the Dutch proposal in 1619 that their rivals should have only one-third of the trade, and when finally, by the "Massacre of Amboyna" in 1623, the English traders were driven away, James was unable to obtain redress, or even to secure for his subjects a share in the trade. As a result the English merchants devoted their energies to the trade with Hindostan, ultimately to their greater profit. Surat, their first factory in India, had been founded in 1609.

The Council of Trade.—It is possible that these difficulties with the Dutch led James I. to contemplate the creation of a Council of Trade—the policy afterwards carried

out by Charles I. The system of "well-ordered trade" demanded constant watchfulness on the part of the authorities, both in the interests of the workers—generally the weavers—and of the king's revenue. However, it conflicted with the interests of those merchants who were not members of the various privileged companies, and these later secured the ear of the House of Commons, which was jealous of any exercise of authority by the king, especially since they distrusted him on other grounds.

The Plantation of Ulster.—The Plantation of Ulster is another example of the good intentions but executive weakness of James I. Lord Mountjoy had starved the Irish into submission before Elizabeth's death, and in 1607 the Earl of Tyrone in despair fled to Spain. By the strict letter of the English law James I. was justified in confiscating the lands of the "rebel," but by Irish law the land belonged to the clan and not to the chief. The king desired to "anglicise" the people or at any rate the land, and he handed over large tracts of country by royal charter to English and Scottish settlers. The London Livery Companies were persuaded to undertake the development of the district now known as County Londonderry.

Unfortunately James did not adhere to the wise plan of his Lord Deputy, Sir Arthur Chichester, and give the best land to the Irish; instead, the portions assigned to the natives were both scanty and barren. The consequence was that the Irish became tenants of the new settlers at extortionate rents, which led to trouble later and militated against the success of the "plantation," as it was called. Ireland was to the king a second Virginia, and this conception and the consequent disregard of the rights of the natives were probably the main causes of the later troubles in Ireland.

Domestic Policy of James I.—England itself suffered from a similar inability of the king to understand that good intentions are not always sufficient to ensure the success of a scheme. Like his son Charles I., James was willing, with perhaps too little thought of the possible injustice to their existing inhabitants, to support schemes for draining the fens. In 1619 James I. decided that the Elizabethan legislation had done its work, and that it was no longer necessary to enforce strictly the laws against enclosing, despite the possible hardships to the peasant squatters, who did not wish to be forced into agriculture or industry. Perhaps we can have more sympathy with the king's idea of town-planning than the citizens of London had, and he was certainly wiser than they when he wished them to supersede their insanitary, if picturesque, wooden houses by structures of brick. Timber was required for ship-building and was none too plentiful.

The Monopolies.—However, nothing better illustrates the dangers of James's policy of centralised control than the story of his attempt to establish monopolies. Probably his chief, if not his sole, aim was to help on the national prosperity by introducing new trades, such as the manufacture of glass, soap, and gold thread. Technically such grants, being made to companies and not to individuals, did not infringe Elizabeth's statute of 1601, and his scheme for controlling inns and ale-houses through a sort of "public-house trust" was certainly philanthropic. The king seems to have made little from his concession, and it is doubtful even if the courtiers by whose help the grants of monopoly were obtained benefited very largely. However, it is impossible to defend some of the grants, and it is clear that many of the monopolists abused their powers, especially those connected with the manufacture of gold and silver thread and the licensing of inns. In the

face of the evidence brought up James did not attempt to defend the monopolists, the most guilty of whom, Sir Giles Mompesson, was impeached in 1621, and the king agreed to a statute abolishing monopolies in 1624.

Decay of the Navy.—It was the misfortune of James I. that he trusted unwise advisers and was betrayed by them. Not only did he prefer Carr and Villiers to wise counsellors such as Bacon, his Chancellor, and Coke, his Chief Justice, but he allowed the glorious Elizabethan navy to be ruined by the incompetent, not to say dishonest, Sir Robert Mansell, the Treasurer of the Navy. The king was cheated into paying the wages of non-existent seamen, and the actual crews were made discontented and inefficient by being defrauded of part of their scanty wages and by wretched food. The English mercantile marine was rapidly increasing, but it obtained little protection from the Royal Fleet against the various Moslem and Christian pirates who swarmed even in the Narrow Seas.

2. ENGLAND UNDER CHARLES I.

Growth of Trade.—The constant quarrels of Charles I. and his parliaments must not be allowed to delude us into overlooking the very real material progress of the nation during his reign. In 1639 the authorities of Trinity House declared that navigation had increased during the preceding thirty years "by ten to one," and two years later Lewis Roberts, the author of *Treasure of Traffike*, estimated that the annual receipts from the customs had increased from £14,000 to £500,000. The lawyers who led the parliamentary opposition to the early Stuarts realised that the legal power of the monarchy could only be controlled by making the king dependent on Parliament for supplies; hence they viewed with sus-

picion the king's claim to levy tunnage and poundage and impositions without parliamentary sanction, fearing that by the growth of trade the yield from the customs might ultimately make the king independent of parliamentary grants in time of peace.

The Council of Trade.—Much of the increase of trade was probably due to the exertions of the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade which Charles I., following out a scheme of his father, organised in 1626. The members of this Council, which met regularly till about 1640, were drawn from Privy Councillors, "gentlemen of quality," farmers of the customs, and merchants. The objects of the Council were: "(1) To advance home commodities; (2) To repress the ungaineful Importacion of forraigne Commodities to the end Trade may bee ballanced, to the advancement of the generall profit, and that in such a way a good correspondencie may be held with neighbour States."

Policy of Charles I.—Charles I. was a thorough-going mercantilist both in his foreign and his domestic policy. It is easy but perhaps hardly just to suggest that throughout he was actuated merely by love of exercising power and by the desire to free himself from the control of Parliament. His ultimate failure was due largely to his own limitations as a statesman, for his ability was far less than that of his father, while his difficulties were even greater. Modern research has vindicated his good intentions even where it has exposed the reasons for his failure. Charles tried to wield the power of the Tudors without their peculiar gift of managing Parliament and people, at a time when the growth of the prosperity he was fostering made the commercial middle classes eager to develop on their own lines. Unfortunately for the king his religious opponents were as a rule found among the middle classes, and those who resented his patronage of the High Church

party were the very people in many cases who were also irritated by his interference with trade.

Personal Government.—The “personal government” of Charles I. began with his accession in 1625, for when Parliament met during the years 1625 to 1629 it was actually hardly more of a restraint than during the suspension of its functions between 1629 and 1640. The king could certainly maintain that Parliament began the “innovations” by refusing to make him the usual grant of tunnage and poundage for life. Henceforth he was bound to decide on all matters on the basis of their effect on his royal income. For example, when in 1626 he allowed the “Book of Rates,” which determined the amount of customs duty paid, to be overhauled by the help of the merchants, he felt able to accept only such proposals as would not adversely affect the royal revenue. He was not wise enough to anticipate the policy of Peel and Gladstone, and understand that a system of lower duties by encouraging trade would ultimately increase the royal revenue. At another time only the advice of his Council saved him from the disastrous plan of seeking temporary gain by debasing the coinage, and in 1627 he offended the powerful Goldsmiths’ Company by reviving an old right of the Crown and appointing an officer to regulate the rate at which foreign money should be exchanged for English, irrespective of the course of trade.

Royal Grants of Monopoly.—However, like his father, Charles did his best to promote native industries. He tried to develop the manufacture of salt on Tyneside in 1628 and 1629, so that the fishing industry might be independent of foreign salt. Even Scottish salt had to pay a duty, but Charles created a salt monopoly against which the usual complaints were made in 1641. Indeed he strained to breaking point the Act of 1624 against

monopolies by granting patents for the manufacture, ostensibly by new processes, of articles in common use. A good example is his incorporation of a company of soap-boilers in 1631; without going into the details of a tangled story it may suffice to say that however good the king's intentions may have been, he succeeded only in inflicting the maximum of inconvenience on the independent soap-boilers and his subjects generally with the minimum of advantage to himself. At the Council of York in 1640 Charles had to declare most of his industrial patents invalid.

Royal Interference with Trade.—Charles I. preferred to supervise industry by means of royal officials rather than through the Chartered Companies, but in 1636 he created a company of brickmakers in London, and in 1638 he protected the makers of beaver hats against foreign competition. However, even his good intentions sometimes got him into disfavour. For instance, when he forbade dealers to export corn unless they paid a large fee for a license he offended the shipping interest and the exporting merchants. Probably, as Dr. Cunningham points out, the object of the Stuart interference with prices was to protect the poor consumer against hardship. The Tudors had allowed Parliament to legislate in the interest of the producers, but a powerful Privy Council had protected consumers and seen to it that wages were periodically adjusted to prices.

Growing Weakness of the Privy Council.—However, the Privy Council was much weaker under the Stuarts, not merely because their grip was less sure, but because of a change in the character of the local gentry, to whom as justices of the peace the Council had to entrust the execution of its orders. Even under the Tudors there had been a growing indisposition to carry out the orders

of the Privy Council where they conflicted with the interests of landowners, many of whom had bought and cultivated their land as an investment. There can be no doubt that the landowners of the seventeenth century too often showed scant sympathy with the woes, or even respect for the rights, of their poorer neighbours. The assessment of wages and the levying of the poor rate were not popular with the gentry. The frequency of assessments declined as the actual power of the Privy Council grew less, and a late seventeenth-century tract quoted by Dr. Cunningham maintains that in certain parishes no poor rate was levied for twenty, thirty, or even forty years after the Act of 1601.

Unpopularity of Charles I.—Indeed it may not be going too far to say that the unpopularity of Charles I. among certain sections of his subjects was due partly to his determination to carry out the social legislation of Elizabeth. Between 1629 and 1640 the Council used the Act of 1563 “to check the effects of competition in driving down the wages of weavers,” and insisted on wages assessments. In 1636 the king tried to incorporate the artisans in the suburbs of London in order that the Statute of Artificers might be the more completely carried out. Earlier in his reign he had issued complete building regulations for London, and with almost Tudor care had tried to secure a sufficient supply of good bricks for the new buildings. On another occasion he showed himself willing either to create a fresh corporation for the suburban district between London and Westminster, or to divide it between the two cities. However, the day was past when the Londoners felt the need of the directing hand of paternal despotism.

Enforcement of the Poor Law.—The Elizabethan Poor Law depended for its success on the power of the Privy

Council over the justices of the peace, and Charles I. had offended that important class of subjects by his forced loans and a general disregard of the House of Commons, in which they were powerful. The nobility and gentry saw only a desire for gain in the king's order for a careful perambulation of the royal forests, upon which they and their ancestors had undoubtedly encroached. As Laud endeavoured to punish breaches of the moral law by the gentry as well as breaches of the Ecclesiastical Law by Puritan clergy, the well-born offenders did not appreciate the disinterestedness of the Privy Council in seeking to protect from their greed the poorer members of the community. For example, in 1630-1 the Council in the time of dearth forced those who had supplies of grain to put them on the market at reasonable prices for home consumption, and the king and his counsellors never hesitated to order the justices to enforce on the parishes the provision of work for the unemployed, or to insist that the clothiers should not dismiss their workmen, or even to compel the Merchant Adventurers to take the cloth off the weavers' hands under pain of seeing the trade thrown open to outsiders.

The Commissioners for the Poor.—In June 1630 certain members of the Privy Council were appointed "commissioners for the poor," who not only delegated their power to local commissions, but also divided themselves into a number of groups each responsible for a definite "circuit." For example, Wentworth belonged to the Northern circuit, in which he was naturally interested as President of the Council of the North, while Laud was attached to the Lincoln circuit. In January 1631 the Book of Orders¹ was

¹ For a full account of this interesting experiment see E. M. Leonard, *Early History of English Poor Relief*, pp. 156 et seqq.

issued through which the Council could control the actions of the justices not merely in times of scarcity as in former reigns, but continuously.

The Book of Orders.—The Orders informed the justices that there were already in existence good and sufficient laws for the relief of the poor and for the right use of charitable endowments, and that it was the duty of the justices to see them enforced. Accordingly they were ordered to divide themselves up into groups each responsible for definite hundreds. Monthly meetings of such groups were to be held at which the constables, churchwardens, and overseers were to report how the poor laws were carried out and if offenders were suitably dealt with. The justices were not only to punish neglect among the lower officials, but were themselves to report each quarter to the sheriff, who in turn was to report to the judges of assize. The judges of assize were not only to pass on the formal reports of the commissioners for their particular circuit, but were also to report to the king the names of such justices of the peace as on enquiry they found to be negligent of their duties.

The Privy Council Register between 1631 and 1640 proves that a persistent attempt was made, not wholly without success, to carry out the new system. Falkland, Laud, and Wentworth appear prominently among those who attempted to justify the "personal government" by paternal legislation on socialistic lines which, it is only fair to say, are much more typical of Charles I.'s intentions than some of the acts to which his poverty or religious zeal drove him, such as the indiscriminate levy of ship-money and the attempt to anglicise Scotland and Ireland.

Mistakes of Charles .—It is easy to suggest that Wentworth's zeal for the welfare of the lower classes was merely due to a desire to play them off against the middle classes and so gain support for the king in his struggle with

Parliament ; but we must remember that Charles I. had abundant Tudor precedents both for the actions of his Privy Council and the suspension of Parliament, and that Wentworth's policy in Ireland and his advice to Charles on more than one occasion showed that he at least had no objection to working with a parliament that would accept the Tudor Constitution. The fairest verdict on the " personal government " of Charles I. is not that he was a conscious innovator and would-be tyrant, but that he misread the signs of the times. As Dr. Gardiner says: " If justices of the peace were sometimes ignorant or harsh, if country gentlemen were sometimes violent or oppressive, the evil was not sufficiently widely spread to call for so drastic a remedy. There was nothing to show that the propertied classes would fail as a body to respond to a demand from the Government that justice should be done. "

The king's ideals for the welfare of the State's humblest members, however much they may appeal to modern social reformers, were bound up in the eyes of his parliamentary opponents with methods of government which were contrary to the spirit of the age. The English nation claimed from Charles I. and Oliver Cromwell alike its right to work out its own political and social salvation, even at the cost of serious mistakes. Although the House of Commons did not represent the English people in any real sense of the term, it was more fitted to develop ultimately a sturdy independent social organisation than was the paternal despotism of the king: " everything for the people, but nothing by the people " is a policy ever fatal to the development of a nation's highest qualities.

His Failure not really to be Deplored.—With the meeting of the Long Parliament in November 1640 the power of the King's Council alike for good or evil finally passed away, and the Interregnum began in all but name. How-

ever, Dr. Cunningham does not think that the break-down of the system of central control had any injurious effect on the labourer's standard of comfort during the seventeenth and the first half of the eighteenth century. He points out that there was a rapid growth of trade and an increased demand for labour of many sorts; "the progress of enclosure, though it told against the small farmers, increased the demand for the services of the hired labourers, while the general diffusion of the art of spinning would give a considerable increase to the family income." It must be remembered that rural labourers not only used the commons for their small flocks and herds, but often also worked in a neighbouring town. It was fairly common that the weavers and artisans who worked under the Domestic System also cultivated small holdings, although their agriculture was usually of a very primitive and mainly pastoral type.

Charles I. and the Navigation Acts.—The King's claim to control the foreign trade of the country was no innovation. He was a firm believer in the policy of the Navigation Acts and endeavoured to prevent the Dutch from trading with England's colonies. The Charter of Maryland in 1632 ordered that all the colony's products should be sent to England, although the colony was allowed to tax imports from England. In 1637 the Governor and Council of Virginia were warned against allowing Dutch ships to trade with the colony; if English ships were not available the captains of such Dutch ships as were used had to give bond to carry the cargoes direct to England. However, Charles I. did take a great interest in the colonies, and unlike James I. he was not restrained by fear of offending Spain. He appointed a Colonial Commission in 1634 to draw up regulations for the government of the colonies. As a rule he did not discourage

emigration to America, and he repeated the wise advice of his father to Virginia, that the colonists should attempt to grow their own food and not be tempted by present gain to rely solely on tobacco. Many of the West India islands were colonised in his reign, as well as Carolina, Guiana, Maryland and Long Island.

Piracy and Ship-money.—As piracy was common on all the seas, Charles I. endeavoured to improve the Royal Navy so as to be able to supply convoys to the merchant vessels. Unfortunately, although Buckingham, the Lord High Admiral, fostered the home manufacture of cordage, neither he nor Charles had sufficient knowledge or ability to make up for the leeway lost under James I., and such ships as were built were too often badly designed and of little fighting or sailing value, despite their comparatively large size and cost. The Royal Navy was quite unable to afford proper convoys to the growing mercantile fleet; Algerine pirates swarmed off the Land's End and found their prey both among fishing-boats and merchantmen. In 1631 the corporate town of Baltimore in County Cork, settled by Cornishmen, was sacked by Barbary corsairs. Charles did his best to rescue from their slavery such of his captive subjects as had been taken to Africa, but neither diplomacy nor armed force was successful. The ravages of the Algerine pirates were the explanation, if not the excuse, for Charles I.'s attempt to levy ship-money from inland counties. Hampden's refusal to pay raised the important constitutional question of the king's right to levy direct taxation at his will, just as Bate's case had unsuccessfully challenged the king's right to levy indirect taxation.

Bullionists v. Mercantilists.—If Charles was to defend the shores of his kingdom against attack he must secure command of more treasure to pay seamen and build ships.

As England had no mines of gold and silver, the amassing of treasure had in the seventeenth century come to be looked upon as the most important object of national economic policy. There were two distinct schools of thought on the matter. The older view was that of the Bullionists, who said that foreigners must be compelled to purchase English goods by gold and silver; if such foreigners brought their own goods to England they must be content to receive English goods in exchange, for on no pretext should they be allowed to drain the country of its all too scanty stock of treasure. The newer school of thought was that of the Mercantilists, who agreed that the real test of the desirability of any commercial transaction was whether the "Balance of Trade" was in our favour: the Balance of Trade practically meant that gold and silver might be exported to buy foreign commodities if the latter could be sold in a foreign market for more gold and silver than had been given for them, so as to increase the total amount of the nation's treasure when the transaction was finally closed.

Attack on the East India Company.—The battle raged largely around the position of the East India Company. This company had originally been founded by Queen Elizabeth as a Regulated Company,¹ although by 1612 it was found that it was more convenient to trade as a Joint Stock Company² for a term of years. The company

¹ A *Regulated Company* was one in which the members, though bound by certain rules, traded each on his own account, although they subscribed towards the common expenses of the company: The Merchant Adventurers were a regulated company. Another example is the Stock Exchange.

² A *Joint Stock Company* was one in which the members traded with a common stock and were remunerated out of the profits in proportion to the amount of stock they held. They took no per-

received a monopoly of the trade of "Asia, Africa, and the islands and ports of Asia, Africa, and America beyond the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Magellan," but non-members might be granted licenses to trade. The critics maintained that the company took shipping away from England for long periods on dangerous voyages, unlike the Merchant Adventurers or the Eastland Company, and that the loss of many vessels might put the country in peril. Moreover, it was charged against the members of the East India Company that not only did they do little for the English export trade, but that they even exported bullion.

The Company's Defence.—The company maintained that they actually increased English shipping by finding so much profitable employment for it, but they could not deny that they had had to obtain permission to export gold and silver to buy Indian native products, as the Indians did not require English textiles. To escape this charge the Directors of the East India Company joined with the Muscovy Company in sending out expeditions to find a North-west Passage to China, where they hoped would be a successful market for English textiles. No success was achieved, and the advocates of the company had now to prove that the export of bullion in the course of trade was not really harmful but beneficial to the country.¹

The chief defender of the East India Company was Sir

sonal share in the business, which was managed by a Board of Directors, who employed paid servants. The East India Company in its later form and modern limited liability companies are examples of joint stock companies.

¹ The best account of the controversy is to be found in Hewins' *English Trade and Finance*, Introduction, pp. xxv et seq 1.

Thomas Mun, afterwards a Deputy-Governor of the company, who in 1621 wrote a pamphlet called *A Discourse of Trade from England unto the East Indies*, in which he maintained that as the company were able to import spices by sea at less cost than they were obtained overland through the Venetian and Egyptian merchants, they were thereby justified in exporting bullion. Moreover, he maintained, some English goods *were* exported to India, and there was a profit on the Indian coasting trade. It should be mentioned that after their first voyage the company were expected to import as much bullion as they exported.

Edward Misselden, another official of the company, in 1623 wrote *The Circle of Commerce*, in which he argued that, as Eastern goods were sold in Europe at a profit, a balance of treasure in our favour did result. His great opponent was Gerard Malynes, who was an able and versatile thinker with enlightened views on the subject of the foreign exchanges. Malynes would be content if he were sure that the company did actually import bullion in return for the Eastern commodities they sold to Europe. As a practical merchant he objected to the goldsmiths and other private persons being allowed to fix the rate of exchange to their own gain, but to the detriment of the king and the nation.

Mun's "England's Treasure by Foreign Trade."—The controversy dragged on into the reign of Charles I., and the case for the company was ably stated by Mun in the "Petition and Remonstrance of the East India Company" presented to the House of Commons in 1628, and between 1641 and 1651 Mun elaborated his arguments into a pamphlet entitled *England's Treasure by Foreign Trade*, although it was not published till 1664, some years after his death. His point was that even if the company did export bullion it purchased goods thereby which could

afterwards be exported to foreign countries at a profit, and so caused the influx of more treasure than was originally exported. However, although Mun's arguments in 1628 convinced many people that the export of bullion was not in all circumstances a mistake, they also caused critics to say that as the East India trade was so profitable it could not be right for it to be monopolised by a few persons: it should therefore be thrown open to all Englishmen.

The Interlopers.—Charles I. had his own views on the Eastern trade: it was to be controlled by the Government, but not monopolised by a few London merchants. He was always ready to grant licences to trade in the East at places such as Goa, where the company had no factory or branch, and some of the independent traders—"Interlopers" they were called—dispensed with a royal licence and defied the company for the sake of the large profits they could obtain. Charles, however, expected the East India Company to support him, and on one occasion in 1640 he "borrowed" their stock of pepper and sold it below the market price to secure funds. Naturally he alienated the merchants, since he could not pay for the pepper. When in 1642 he concluded an important commercial treaty with Portugal, which would materially have helped the company, it was rendered useless by the outbreak of the Civil War.

3. THE INTERREGNUM.

Collapse of State Control.—With the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642 began the collapse of the old system of State control over the nation's life and industry. The assize circuits were suspended between 1642 and 1646, and the justices of the peace silently abandoned such

parts of the Stuart system as were distasteful to them. Meanwhile under the pressure of war conditions economic distress grew worse, as servants were turned off by masters desirous of cutting down expenditure. A contemporary pamphleteer, writing of the hard state of the poor in 1648, gives a striking proof of the completeness with which the old system had broken down; the only remedy he can suggest is that if less barley is used for brewing there will be more available for food, but, although he says that in some countries the price of food is fixed by the Government, he seems quite ignorant of the English law by which justices of the peace had the power to fix minimum wages.

Incompetency of the Long Parliament.—Parliament had intervened in 1647 and ordered the erection of a corporation for employing the poor in London, and the pamphleteer just referred to, taking the view that the poor had little to hope for from agriculture, proposed that “hospitals” should be established at which they could earn their living by industrial pursuits. In 1649 another pamphlet, called *The Poor Man’s Advocate*, suggested that the remains of the Crown Lands and the episcopal and cathedral revenues should be utilised for “setting the poor on work.” However, no such statesmanlike utilisation of these revenues was possible to the Rump, which, like the Long Parliament as a whole, was guilty of the grossest mismanagement and corruption. As Oliver Cromwell said on a later occasion, they had run through all these extraordinary resources, including the estates of the Royalist “Delinquents,” and, although they had had in addition a revenue of £120,000 a month, the nation was £700,000 in debt when he dismissed them.

Difficulties of Oliver Cromwell.—Of Cromwell’s good intentions as a ruler there can be no doubt, but he had to

face all the difficulties of Charles I. and special ones of his own. His only assets were his boundless optimism and the devotion of his army, but before his death in September 1658 both had begun to fail him. Unfortunately Cromwell could never find time to tackle the social problem, and it is doubtful if his particular genius could in any case have dealt successfully with it. The State was bankrupt, and the gentry, through whom the government in the counties must be carried on, were no more willing to submit to the personal government of a Protector than of a King. Such of them as were royalist had been soured by fines and defeat, and the landowners of all parties had been hard hit by the prohibition in 1647 of the export of wool, probably in the interests of the weavers who had supported Parliament.

The Major-Generals.—When Cromwell quarrelled with the Parliament elected under the Instrument of Government he found it increasingly difficult to collect the taxes necessary to pay his army and officials. He did not improve matters by sending to the Tower the lawyers of the merchant George Cony, who refused to pay customs duties not imposed by Parliament. Taking advantage of the abortive insurrection of Penruddock in 1655 the masterful Protector divided England up into eleven districts, over each of which he placed a Major-General, who was both a military commander backed by a force of cavalry and the militia, and also a civil official who in Cromwell's name exercised the most despotic powers.

This system was a curious revival of the personal government of Charles I., at least in social and economic affairs. The Major-Generals were ordered to force the unemployed to work, and to expel from the Commonwealth those unwilling to work; they were to investigate the condition of the poor and report on it to the

Protector and his Council. In the meantime they were to insist that the existing laws should be enforced. It is unfortunate that little information exists as to how they carried out their instructions; we can only discover that they paid more attention to the penal than to the ameliorative side of their task.

The Major-Generals were not a success, and were ultimately withdrawn when the Protector wished to placate his opponents. It is probable that the men he chose for the posts were not always suitable, and some of them seem to have acted tyrannically. However, their task of overseeing the local administration was a thankless and well-nigh hopeless one. The Commission of the Peace had been re-organised in 1651, but it has been already pointed out that the country gentry were hostile to the Protector. The Major-Generals not only irritated them, but also in part superseded them, and when these were withdrawn the justices went their own way, and the system of State regulation of wages, prices, and the poor law silently decayed.

Colonial Problems.—Neither the Long Parliament nor Cromwell was any more successful in dealing with Colonial and Foreign Trade problems than with domestic ones. The New England colonies had of course supported Parliament against the king, and the Royalists in Virginia, the neighbouring colonies, and the West Indies were brought to heel because Parliament controlled the sea. The Republican policy towards the colonies is closely connected with events in Ireland, which were the legacy of the earlier Stuarts' attempt to treat Ireland as a colony, to be planted by Englishmen and Scots with very little regard for the rights of the natives.

Ireland.—In 1633 Strafford had been sent to Ireland as Lord Deputy with practically a free hand. He certainly

kept order and obtained a revenue from the Irish Parliament by playing off Roman Catholics against Protestants ; he sacrificed the Irish woollen industry to the jealousy of England, but he tried to establish the linen industry in its stead. By means of an army he made the Government master alike of English lords and Irish chiefs, and a fleet repressed piracy. Unfortunately, however, he recognised the existence of no rights against what he conceived the advantage of the State, and his scheme for repeating in Connaught the plantation of Ulster turned the native Irish against him, while his unsympathetic manner was not, in the eyes of the English settlers, redeemed by his undoubted capacity for rule.

When he was recalled a rebellion broke out in Ireland. Its horrors, great as they were, were undoubtedly exaggerated by terror, for the king and the Irish Protestants were soon able to act together with the Roman Catholic natives against Parliament, and it was not till August 1649 that Cromwell was able to invade Ireland. The story of the Massacre of Drogheda is well known, and even Carlyle's eloquence cannot disguise the ruthless uprooting of the old inhabitants that took place when the conquest was complete. Some of the victims were exiled to the barren lands of Connaught, while others were transported to work in the West Indian sugar islands, especially Barbados, and a hopeless attempt was made to plant Ireland with Puritan settlers.

The Navigation "Ordinance."—Cromwell attempted to entice the Puritans of New England to settle in Ireland, as later he offered them advantages in Jamaica. He apparently looked upon the New Englanders merely as religious refugees who would gladly return nearer home, but he had the wisdom to interfere with their internal concerns as little as possible. The policy of the Naviga-

tion Ordinance of 1651¹ was none of his. He had not returned in triumph from Worcester when it was brought before Parliament, and he "entertained it but coldly," as we are told by a contemporary. No colonial policy that did not promise him the "treasure" he so greatly needed would win Cromwell's favour, and when he decided to risk war with Spain he was quite willing to allow the neutral Dutch to carry English goods on the sea.

War with Spain.—Cromwell desired to obtain the rich and thinly populated island of Hispaniola (now Hayti), as Barbados and the other English islands were overcrowded, and also he was glad of a pretext to repeat the buccaneering raids on the Spanish Treasure Fleets. It is difficult to see how Cromwell reconciled with his conscience the treacherous attack on the island in time of peace, and his exploit, although it ultimately gave him what was at that time the far less valuable island of Jamaica, made him as dependent on Parliament as the Scottish War had made Charles I. Indeed it is very doubtful if any argument exists in favour of the French Alliance and the war with Spain, except that France was far more dangerous as the supporter of Charles II. than Spain could ever be.

Decay of Trade.—The war with Spain was disastrous to English industry and overseas trade, for after the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 the Dutch had made a commercial

¹ This was passed by the Rump, and ordered that no goods should be brought into England except in ships belonging to England or the Plantations, with crews the majority of whom were English. European goods might be imported in ships belonging to the producing country. This Ordinance was aimed directly at the Dutch, who were the chief international carriers, and who were unpopular as commercial rivals and also as supporting Charles II.

treaty with Spain, and with the outbreak of war in 1655 soon ousted the English from the commercial advantages won for them by James I. Moreover, Algerine pirates and royalist privateers made the Navy's task of convoying English merchantmen more and more difficult. Dr. Cunningham maintains that despite the increase of the Protector's customs revenue trade did not flourish under Cromwell; the real cause of the increase was that the customs were no longer farmed and were now strictly levied, some of the former rebates being discontinued. Actually the very London merchants who were the probable authors of the Navigation Ordinance of 1651 proposed in 1654 that Cromwell should copy the free trade policy of the Dutch and seek to make England the commercial centre of Europe. Cromwell was, like Charles I., too pressed for money to try any experiment that did not promise immediate gain: the total volume of English trade probably diminished, but Cromwell unlike Burleigh was content that the French trade—so profitable to the customs—increased in its yield.

Cromwell and the Trading Companies.—It was perhaps natural that free trade ideas should revive on the fall of the king from whom the chartered monopolists had received their grant. The Muscovy Company was practically ruined and the East India Company saw their rights rudely infringed by interlopers. Cromwell was no more sympathetic than the Long Parliament, and although in 1654 he forced the Dutch to make amends for the Amboyna Massacre he was apparently ready to leave the trade of the Indies to the Dutch in return for a sum of money. Another sufferer was the Merchant Adventurers' Company, which told Cromwell that since he was unable to supply efficient convoys to Hamburg their trade was falling off and a native cloth manufacture was growing up in Germany.

Oliver Cromwell was above all things a practical man, and after finding that four years' experience of "free" trade was not beneficial he revived the exclusive rights of the Chartered Companies in 1657, and the East India Company received from him a considerable extension of its former judicial and military powers, which enabled it to keep down pirates and interlopers alike.¹ Hatred of the Dutch caused the Portuguese in 1654 to revive Charles I.'s treaty of 1642 and allow Englishmen to trade with Goa and their other Indian settlements, but the unfortunate Levant Company was suffering from the ravages of Turkish and Spanish pirates as late as 1657, despite the exploits of Admiral Blake's fleet at Tunis and elsewhere.

Effect of the Civil War on Trade.—The Civil War had indeed inflicted a heavy blow on British prosperity. Violet, one of the witnesses before a Parliamentary Committee in 1650, maintained that the former flourishing trade had largely vanished by that date, and "our Golden Fleece, which is our Indies" (*i.e.* the wool supply), had been ruined by the soldiers or exported to the Netherlands; clothiers and workmen had only the alternatives of fighting or emigrating, and merchants were discouraged and sometimes ruined by the seizure of their goods in foreign ports, as those of rebels, by rulers who favoured Charles I.² The seas swarmed with royalist privateers who preyed upon the unprotected English merchantmen, whereas the "Hollanders and Jutlanders" having convoys escaped and captured the foreign markets, especially when the Dutch made peace with Spain. English capital was

¹ Probably this complaisance was due, partly at all events, to Cromwell's desire to secure the support of the merchant class for the "conservative" revision of the Constitution in 1657, known as the "Humble Petition and Advice."

² The reference is to events at Leghorn and in Russia.

diminished; foreign bankers called in their loans, and English capitalists invested abroad the remnants of the wealth they had not lost in the wars. England became a food-importing country, and the financial distress was so great that the savage bankruptcy laws of the time had to be modified in favour of "innocent" debtors.

4. ENGLAND UNDER CHARLES II.

Commercial Revival under Charles II.—The historians Ranke and Gardiner maintained that the commercial revival of the seventeenth century began under Oliver Cromwell, but probably Dr. Cunningham is far more correct in affirming that it really began in the reign of Charles II. He points out that Cromwell lost us the Spanish market, and that in his trade and colonial policy he generally copied the early Stuarts, except perhaps when he proposed the retrograde step of establishing a commercial staple at Dunkirk. Cromwell's favourite plan of a great Protestant Alliance involved concessions to the Dutch which were quite out of keeping with any scheme of Empire-building.

Naval Expansion.—Actually Charles II. was an exceedingly shrewd and far-seeing statesman with remarkably few prejudices, thanks to his enforced foreign travel. His very vices—his selfishness and taste for dissipation—made him desire a larger income than Parliament actually granted, and the best chance of the desired increase lay in the development of foreign trade, which would increase the yield of the export and import duties. Accordingly one of the first statutes of his reign was that passed in 1661 to improve the convoy service, and throughout his reign both he and the Duke of York took keen interest in the development of the Royal Navy. By 1662, thanks to adroit

diplomacy and gifts, he had won from the pirate states of Tunis, Tripoli and Algiers a promise to leave English merchants alone.

Commercial Treaties with Spain, etc. — Charles II. showed remarkable skill in negotiating a series of useful commercial treaties during the early years of his reign. It is true that Cromwell's victories had lessened the intensity of the practical outlawry from which English merchants had suffered, but Charles was eager for his own ends to secure for them actual advantages. His marriage with Katherine of Braganza in 1662 not only gained him Tangiers—the gateway of the Mediterranean—and Bombay—so useful to the East India Company—but also paved the way for the revival of the important trade with the Azores, Madeira, the Portuguese Indies, and Brazil. The Portuguese had revolted against the Spaniards in 1640, and, as during their enforced union with Spain they had suffered heavy colonial losses at the hands of the Dutch, they gladly favoured the English at the expense of the latter in the important carrying trade with their colonies.

Perhaps the most far-reaching in its effects was the commercial treaty with Spain which Charles II. negotiated in 1667. This treaty contained a "most favoured nation" clause which secured automatically for English merchants any concessions made to those of other nations. Henceforth the English had equal rights with the Dutch and the Hansa merchants in trading with Spain and the Spanish Netherlands, and it was agreed that goods which had paid duty on being imported into Spain might be re-exported duty-free within a year. Probably this clause hit the Dutch even harder than the Navigation Acts, as it practically gave English goods the right of entry into the Spanish Indies. Another interesting clause was that by which the Spanish king agreed to connive at the worship

of the English merchants so long as public scandal was not caused. Between 1667 and 1668 commercial treaties were also negotiated with Denmark, Louis XIV., and even the Dutch.

Weakness of the Privy Council after the Restoration.—

The Civil War was an important crisis in the social history of England, for although the monarchy was restored Charles II. was wise enough not to attempt to revive the centralised governmental system of his father. Not only had the legislation of the Long Parliament struck a heavy blow at the influence of the Privy Council, but the events of the preceding years had wrought a great change in the character of the country gentry through whom as justices of the peace the Council had exercised its authority in regulating trade and social conditions. There was no systematic attempt after the Restoration to revive centralised control over the working of the Statutes of Artificers of 1563 or even of the Poor Law of 1601. The gentry had to a large extent lost their influence, or at any rate their willingness to act as agents of the central government, since the fall of Charles I., and gradually the practice of issuing regulations to control wages and prices fell silently into disuse. Similarly the old elaborate system of search and supervision over home manufactures was abandoned in the presence of the growing capitalistic system of production, and until capitalists learned the folly of ruining the reputation of their goods in foreign markets by supplying faulty articles for the sake of increased profit the quality of English manufactures probably suffered by lack of supervision.¹

Work of the "Council for Trade."—As his revenue was

¹ The custom of using "trade-marks" in the cloth trade came to offer a guarantee as reliable as that secured by royal supervision.

secured for his life by grant of Parliament Charles II. had less reason than the earlier Stuarts to seek an income from grants of monopolies and patents. Accordingly, as he had no wish to arouse opposition, he left the regulation of trade and social conditions very largely to Parliament. It is true that following the practice of his father, to which even Cromwell had in the end reverted, Charles II. established a committee of the Council for Trade which contained expert members, and by the advice of this committee he was bold enough to allow free trade in bullion and so encourage foreign commerce.

The Act of Settlement, 1662.—However, as a rule, he left to Parliament the honour—and the risk—of settling difficult questions. Parliament was responsible for the Act of Settlement of 1662, which, in a praiseworthy attempt to put down vagrancy by insisting that each parish should make legal provision for the poor according to the statute of 1601, actually re-established a system of modified serfdom in the country villages. Parishes were empowered to prevent the settlement in their midst of all persons not born in that particular parish who could not provide a guarantee that they would not become chargeable to the poor rate. The unforeseen result was that the parish authorities made it impossible for the labourer and artisan to seek for the work that might have made them profitable members of society, but compelled them to become idlers in their native village. The Act was not only responsible for a mass of litigation between parochial authorities in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but must share with the “Speenhamland Act” the blame for the pauperisation of the English peasantry and part of the horrors of the Industrial Revolution of that period.

Influence of French and Dutch Systems.—Two neighbouring peoples—the French and the Dutch—were strik-

ing examples to the English of the success of quite antagonistic ideas of national development. Charles II., like the earlier Stuarts, preferred the French system, under which, thanks to royal control and initiative, a nation which seemed to have been ruined by the wars of religion in the sixteenth century, had in the seventeenth century prospered amazingly in its social and industrial as well as in its political life. The French kings had planted many new industries, and the nation, never accustomed to individual enterprise, would never have developed a satisfactory standard of manufacture, had not careful supervision been exercised by the central government. Under Louis XIV. his great minister Colbert carried the system of State control to unheard of limits, and did not scruple either to raise a prohibitive tariff against the Dutch or to sacrifice French agriculture to the advantage of more promising sources of national wealth. It is true that the constant wars of Louis XIV. prevented Colbert's scheme from having a fair trial, but even under Elizabeth, James I., and Charles I. such an exercise of the power of government was not suitable to the English character.

Influence of Puritan Ideals of Independence.—By the reign of Charles II. Puritanism had so emphasised the importance of the rights of the individual, even among those who were not Puritan by religion, that any attempt to re-introduce on a large scale the system of royal regulation of commerce and industry would have been resented. However, jealousy of French progress and power led men to examine the sources of French wealth, and, as Dr. Cunningham points out, the parliamentary statesmen of the eighteenth century consciously applied French principles, but with different administrative methods. ⁷⁴

Strangely enough, while the Whigs of the eighteenth century admired French ideals so much that their system

has been styled "Parliamentary Colbertism," their Tory rivals favoured what may be called by way of contrast the *quasi*-Free Trade policy of the Dutch. However, both parties admired and envied the marvellous maritime and commercial development of the Dutch, and, despite the wars waged against that nation both by the Commonwealth and by Charles II., the relations between the rivals were drawn so close under Charles II.—largely from a common fear of the ambition of Louis XIV.—that the English in 1688 found their first parliamentary sovereign in the Stadtholder of republican Holland.

Dutch Influence on England.—The parliamentary leaders under Charles I. could not have adopted the unpopular excise as a method of raising revenue had it not already been adopted by the republican Dutch. However, at the Restoration the excise became a usual method of taxation, and was largely developed under William and Anne. English institutions were criticised in Charles II.'s reign in the light of Dutch methods; men pointed out that the Dutch did not allow exclusive chartered monopolies on the lines of the English East India Company, nor did they give statutory sanction to a rate of interest as high as that which was legal in England. When in 1672 Charles II.'s Treasurer gave notice that the king would not pay the principal of loans due that year, but only the interest, he struck the death-blow to the old system under which the goldsmiths, acting as bankers, lent out their clients' money at excessive rates of interest. The inevitable sequel was the establishment on Dutch methods of the National Debt and the Bank of England under William III.

The Navigation Act of 1660.—English statesmen were willing to adopt methods foreign to the Dutch in their efforts to rival them in sea-power and commerce. The Navigation Ordinance of 1651, which had been aimed

directly at the Dutch and was defended by war, was renewed and strengthened in 1660. Now, not only must the importing vessel be English-built and carry a crew three-fourths of whom must be English, but even when a foreign ship brought the products of its own country to England they had to pay a higher duty. Moreover, not only was the external trade of the "Plantations" controlled as in 1651, but in 1660 their internal trade was regulated as well. No foreign ships might trade with the plantations, and no alien might be a merchant or factor there. The governors were incited to vigilance by being guaranteed a third share of each forfeited ship. Certain staple commodities were "enumerated," such as sugar, cotton, tobacco, wool, indigo, ginger, and dye-woods, and captains of ships carrying them had to give a bond that they would export such articles only *direct* to England.

How far Successful.—Some contemporary observers believed that the Act of 1660, which was strengthened later, was successful in causing the eclipse of the Dutch commercial marine by their English rivals, and it has been estimated that the English mercantile marine doubled itself between 1660 and 1688, but it must be remembered that the Dutch lead was not really overtaken till the middle of the eighteenth century, and that at any rate a partial reason for their failure was the pressure of the long war with France.¹ However, as has already been

¹ Adam Smith defended the Navigation Act on the ground that, although it might indirectly injure British trade, it did strike a blow at the Dutch, who, thanks to their fleet, were the only nation able to invade England. He maintained that defence was of more importance than opulence. The Act of 1660 cost the English their share of the Baltic and Scandinavian trade, as they did not possess suitable ships. The monopoly of this trade, which the Dutch now obtained, more than compensated them for the loss of the colonial trade.

pointed out, the legislation both of 1651 and 1660 had many precedents dating from Richard II.'s reign, and neither of the Acts was strictly enforced by the English Government despite the protests of Parliament in 1663, and both were at times frequently violated by the colonists. Maryland in particular carried on so considerable a trade with what was then the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam that even Charles II. was alarmed at the loss of his customs, and thus turned his attention to the American colonies.

Colonial Policy of Charles II.—Clarendon, who to some extent in the early years of Charles II.'s reign held the position of Burleigh as royal adviser, had, after the passing of the Navigation Act of 1660, established a separate Committee of the Privy Council, which was strengthened by the inclusion of members representing both the chartered companies and the independent merchants who were engaged in trade to the plantations and to foreign countries. The work of this council has already been referred to so far as it concerned foreign trade, but the members who, probably as a separate committee, dealt with the plantations afforded very great assistance to the Government. The Governors of the various colonies under Charles II. were of a better standing than later, and protected even against the home authorities the interests of their own colony. Lord Willoughby and his son at Barbados and the "Carribee" Islands, Sir Thomas Modyford at Jamaica, and Sir W. Stapleton in the Leeward Islands all helped on in different ways the prosperity of the West Indies, which received in most cases representative institutions where they were not already existing. This was also the age of Morgan and the great buccaneers or pirates of the Spanish Main, and it has been suggested that they

bought the royal connivance by a share in their ill-gotten gains.

Work of Clarendon.—The New England colonies were handled on the whole with great skill. Clarendon took advantage of their internal quarrels to fasten the royal control on them firmly if lightly; he was willing to give charters and to tolerate Puritanism, but he meant to enforce the Navigation Act in a district where it was largely disregarded. Connecticut and Rhode Island were favoured as being rivals of Massachusetts—the danger zone—and Clarendon sent across the Atlantic certain commissioners, who were to arrange for the conquest of New Amsterdam, and also for the complete submission of Massachusetts to the royal authority.

New Amsterdam was conquered without much difficulty in 1664 and re-named “New York” after the king’s brother. However, the Massachusetts colonists objected to the Commissioners’ proposal that there should be an appeal from the colonial to the royal courts, and only a timely present of masts for the Royal Navy and provisions for Barbados smoothed over a dangerous crisis. Soon afterwards peace was made with the Dutch and their allies the French. It may have been ignorance of geography that caused the cession of Nova Scotia to the French, but it has been suggested that Clarendon was content to leave the French with rights in Nova Scotia and on the “French Shore” of Newfoundland in order to make the imperial protection necessary to the stiff-necked folk of Massachusetts. In 1667, soon after the peace of Breda had been signed, Clarendon was driven into exile and the Council for Foreign Plantations was itself dissolved in 1675.

Locke and Shaftesbury.—Another famous president of this council was the Earl of Shaftesbury, who had been a member of the council from the beginning and had taken

a keen interest in devising plans for the enforcement of the Navigation Act in the colonies. The secretary from October 1673 was the philosopher John Locke. Both president and secretary were keenly interested in the scheme for the development of Carolina: an earlier attempt under Charles I. had not been proceeded with. Locke was responsible for an elaborate written constitution, under which the government of the colony was to be shared by certain "Lords Proprietors" and an Assembly representing the settlers. Titles such as "landgrave" and "cacique" might be used in the colony, and the lawyers were forbidden to receive money or reward for their services. All laws were to be considered as repealed by flux of time at the end of one hundred years and no comment or exposition of the "Fundamental Constitution" was allowed.

However, despite religious toleration and liberal commercial concessions, the new constitution was not a success. Shaftesbury and Locke tried hard, though in vain, to attract settlers, and North Carolina became a refuge for debtors. In 1693 the Proprietors repealed the elaborate constitution, but it was only through slavery and cotton that South Carolina at last grew into importance. Shaftesbury's interest in the Bahama Islands was little more fruitful, but he deserves praise for his zeal in preventing by legislation the spiriting away to the colonies of unfortunate women and children (1670). However, so scanty was the flow of settlers that justices were empowered to send to the colonies those found guilty of petty thefts, "sturdy beggars," and similar kinds of people. Shaftesbury was also statesman enough to realise that the colonies with their simpler conditions of life might be a suitable field for social and legislative experiments inadvisable in England.

Troubles in Virginia and Massachusetts.—Charles II.'s relations with Virginia were at times stormy, largely owing to the eccentricities of Governor Berkeley. However, despite the outbreak known as "Bacon's Rebellion" in 1676, royal commissioners tactfully smoothed matters over. Far more difficult was the management of Massachusetts. The colony had annexed Maine and in 1675-1678 was engaged in the Indian war of Philip. The king was determined to enforce the Navigation Act, and his clever agent Randolph would probably have rendered useless the offer of the moderates among the colonists to administer the hated Act themselves had not the quarrel with the Whigs turned the king's attention elsewhere. However, in 1683 the now absolute king managed to find an excuse to cancel the colony's charter, and the colonists, hedged in between the French in Canada and the Crown colony of New York, were helpless to resist. Royal officials reduced the old colonial independence to a farce, but the Revolution of 1688 emboldened the colonists to restore the old order by a bloodless revolution.

Settlement of Pennsylvania.—It is pleasanter to refer to the royal grant of Pennsylvania to the Quaker William Penn in 1682. This colony was founded on part of the territory wrested from the Dutch, and the Duke of York showed himself surprisingly liberal or complaisant both with regard to Pennsylvania and New York. Pennsylvania perhaps owed its first prosperity to the mild and equable character of its government and tactful handling of the Indians, but New York certainly flourished solely by trade. Trade also was the origin of the Hudson Bay Company, whose charter was procured by the king's cousin Prince Rupert in 1670.

Renewed Attack on the East Indi Company.—The East India Company owes a great deal to Charles II., who

handed over to it the useful island of Bombay. From 1661 it was not only a trading monopoly, but, as Charles II. was even more liberal to it than Cromwell, it became a political and judicial power and used its rights unsparingly against all competitors. Naturally it came in for much adverse criticism. Men said it monopolised capital that might have been used to develop home industries, which could not borrow money as the Company did at 3 per cent. It was argued that it exported little English cloth and that its imports of silk and rice could be obtained by the older Levant Company. Moreover, not only did it flourish enormously when it was allowed to export bullion, but it flourished largely by importing Eastern textiles which competed with English products at home and in Europe. Its critics allowed that the saltpetre, drugs and spices imported by the company were useful, but they insisted that the company's trade although "gainful to individuals" was harmful to the Commonwealth.

Case of Thomas Skinner.—During the Interregnum the "Interlopers" had built up a considerable trade, and these outside merchants claimed the right to visit such Indian ports as were not used by the company. One of these merchants named Thomas Skinner met with drastic treatment, for the company seized his ship and an island he had bought from a native king in 1657, and forced him to travel back to Europe by land. The House of Lords awarded Skinner £5,000 damages in 1666, but the House of Commons championed the company and sent Skinner to the Tower; nor was he able to obtain any redress.

Policy of Sir Josiah Child.—However, about 1680 the company, now under the leadership of Sir Josiah Child, became mixed up in politics and supported the Court party. Child won the favour of the Duke of York by magnificent presents and could count on his support as

king. He despised "regulated companies" almost as much as he despised the House of Commons, and proposed to keep the company strictly on a joint-stock basis. His rival Papillon joined the Whigs and lost his post as a director, but Child was weakened by the fall of his patron James II., and Papillon and his friends in their hatred of Child came to terms with the Interlopers. It was useless for Child to argue that the company deserved their monopoly because they had obtained concessions from native princes and had gone to the expense of upholding the forts and embassies which alone made trade possible, whereas the Interlopers constantly created friction with the natives by their piracy and general ill-behaviour. Their charter rested purely on a royal grant, but after 1688 the royal right to grant such a monopoly was contrary to the opinions of the victorious Parliament.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MERCANTILE SYSTEM. PHASE II.— PARLIAMENTARY COLBERTISM.

Parliamentary Colbertism.—"Parliamentary Colbertism" is the descriptive title applied by Dr. Cunningham to the economic régime inaugurated by the Revolution of 1688. As yet few persons in England were believers in the advantages of unlimited freedom either in foreign trade or domestic industry. Parliament, however, professed that it regulated trade in the interest of the nation as a whole: it was a common, and not wholly unfounded, charge against the early Stuarts that their grants of patents and monopolies were often made, not in the interests of the nation as a whole, but of those individuals and companies who would make the Crown gifts of money.

Cause of England's Protectionist Policy.—The economic reforms of the French statesman Colbert were directed towards the development of his country's prosperity, but as Louis XIV. identified the State with himself, Colbert naturally was led to create a protective system which would supply his master with the wealth he needed; it was only a small matter that French agriculture was sacrificed. The English Parliament, on the other hand, in theory at least, identified the English State with the

English people, and thus the result of its protective legislation differed from that of Colbert, although the methods were much the same. Parliament believed that the best interests of England would be served in proportion as the prosperity of France could be damaged; yet the jealousy of France was political and not economic in origin as had been the earlier feeling against the Dutch. Englishmen cheerfully sacrificed the possible advantages of a commercial treaty with France in 1713, lest a more prosperous France might be the better able to overthrow the parliamentary system in England.

Perhaps Parliament was right in refusing to interpret national prosperity solely in terms of material wealth, but it was itself scarcely more truly representative of the nation than the Stuart kings had been, and, with the possible exception of Walpole, it produced no economic statesman able to use to advantage its control over the nation's industry and commerce. Its activities may be conveniently studied under the heads of (1) the fate of the trading companies, (2) parliamentary regulation of industry and commerce, and (3) the break-down of the old mercantile system as exemplified by the successful revolt of the American colonies. Parliamentary Colbertism was not formally abandoned till the era of Peel and Gladstone, but the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century and the new ideas of liberty unchained by the French Revolution sapped its vitality; the victory of *laissez-faire* theories in economics was largely due to the impossibility of adapting the old system to the new industrial and social conditions. Population grew rapidly and overflowed into the formerly sparsely-peopled North, and it became impossible to apply the old regulations to mitigate the effects of the economic revolution, even if the governing classes had retained any confidence in them.

1. THE FATE OF THE TRADING COMPANIES.

Parliament and the Trading Companies.—The trading companies owed their charters to the fact that through them the king might control the course of foreign trade in places where the royal justices of the peace and other officials had no authority; moreover, the royal customs might be more easily collected from a registered body of merchants. Such companies had no occasion to seek parliamentary recognition before the Revolution of 1688, despite the attacks of the Interlopers during the Commonwealth and the reign of Charles II. However, many Englishmen after 1688, although not opposed to a trading company as a recognised institution, desired a radical alteration in the management of the existing companies, while the clearer-sighted directors of the various companies, afraid for their monopolies, were eager to have their rights confirmed by Parliament.

As the seventeenth century saw England passing more and more from the condition of a country exporting mainly raw materials to that of a country possessing a considerable export trade of home manufactures, especially textiles, the old arguments in support of the system of chartered companies began to lose their weight.

The companies were originally designed in accordance with medieval theories of commercial policy: it was then considered to be a good thing to limit the export of English staples¹ so that their price might be low in England and high abroad. It might conceivably have been advantageous to prohibit the export of raw materials

¹ A "staple" commodity was one that was chiefly produced in a country; in medieval England it was wool, and in the seventeenth century cloth.

such as hides and wool, but it was certainly not advantageous in the seventeenth century to limit the export of English textiles, into the manufacture of which native labour so largely entered.

The Case for the Merchant Adventurers.—The Merchant Adventurers maintained that their possession of a practical monopoly of the export of textiles prevented a fall in prices, as they were able to forecast the probable demand and to warn against over-production. Such an argument might be valid in the old days of competing city states, but in the seventeenth century "industry had become national and commerce international," and the Interlopers were justified in their view that if all Englishmen were allowed freely to export native manufactures it would result in an enormous expansion alike of the demand for English labour and the volume of foreign trade. There can be no doubt that invention and enterprise were considerably hampered by the existence of trading monopolies. Like the manor and the guild they had served their generation well, but by the eighteenth century they had become obsolete. Men had come round to the view of Thomas Milles, the "Customer" (Customs Collector) of Sandwich in the time of James I., who in his *Customer's Alphabet and Primer* maintained that "the best rules for order to direct traffic by were those which were fair to all subjects of the realm." The privileges of the companies were not at first formally abrogated, but they were made available to all Englishmen on easy terms and were no longer confined to a ring mainly of London merchants.

Their Later History.—The Merchant Adventurers had survived the Interregnum, and, as Charles II. forced them to reduce the fine on entrance to twenty marks in London and ten marks elsewhere, the company ceased to be in

practice a monopoly. The comparative weakness of the Hanseatic League in the later seventeenth century, largely the result of the 'Thirty Years' War, gave the English Adventurers a very large share of the trade along the Rhine and the Elbe as well as of that with Denmark. The Adventurers' troubles were chiefly due to their domestic quarrels. The local companies, especially at York and Newcastle, maintained that their interests were continually sacrificed to those of the London merchants. However, the "Hamburg Company," as the Merchant Adventurers were called in the eighteenth century, carried on a more or less flourishing trade with the great Elbe port until Napoleon closed their Hamburg court in 1806 on inaugurating his Continental System. Many of the English Adventurers' companies survive to-day, at least in name, as at Newcastle and Bristol.

The Eastland Company.—The Eastland Company was also re-established at the Restoration with a lower entrance fee, but the trade with Denmark and Scandinavia was declared open to all Englishmen. For the remainder of the Baltic trade the company fought a losing struggle with the Dutch, who, cut off from the Plantation trade by the Navigation Acts, threw more energy into the appropriation of the former Hanseatic monopoly of the Baltic corn trade.¹ Thanks to their more suitable ships and the large granaries at Amsterdam, and helped by Cromwell's quarrel with Spain, they easily cut out the Eastland Company from the carrying trade to the Spanish Peninsula and the Mediterranean. The English Government, which hoped to get timber and ships' stores from the North

¹ An English fleet had captured a Hansa corn fleet in 1597, and the troubles in Germany in the early seventeenth century gave the merchants no chance to replace it.

American colonies, had no special interest in the prosperity of the Eastland Company, but the latter seems to have been so moderate in its use of its monopoly that it escaped attack after 1688. Its able Governor, Nathaniel Tench, was a strong defender of the view that companies rightly managed were more beneficial to England than unrestricted free trade.

The Muscovy Company.—The Muscovy Company was certainly an example of a badly managed company. During the early years of the seventeenth century the company suffered both from bad management and Dutch competition, and by 1660 it had dwindled into an oppressive joint stock monopoly in the hands of a few London merchants. Of all the company's old Russian privileges nothing remained but a precarious and restricted right of trade at Archangel. Charles II. vainly tried to regain the former concessions from the Tsar, and had to be content with re-organising the company afresh; it was now to be "Regulated," with a £50 entrance fee, instead of being a joint stock monopoly, which had exacted heavy fees for licenses to trade, and neither followed the Greenland whale-fishing itself nor allowed anyone else to do so. At last in 1697 a chance of prosperity came, for the Tsar Peter the Great granted a tobacco monopoly to the English merchants. Governor Tench of the Eastland Company, who had a great belief in the possibility of establishing a large and profitable market for English textiles in Russia if merchants would be content with lower profits, now proposed that, as the few members of the existing Muscovy Company could not find the capital necessary for the trade, their rights should be set aside. His plan was accepted and the entrance fee was reduced to £5, with the result that complaints against the company ceased, and it lingered to the end of the eighteenth century.

The Turkey or Levant Company.—The Turkey or Levant Company also received a fresh charter from Charles II. in 1661 and, perhaps owing to the king's adroit handling of the pirate Barbary States, the trade revived so much that the company undertook to pay the stipends of the English ambassador to Turkey, as well as those of the consuls there.¹ It was largely due to the heavy charges thus assumed that the Turkey Company were unable to compete on equal terms with their French rivals, whose king—the traditional ally of the Sultan—not only paid all diplomatic and consular expenses, but also gave a liberal bounty on the Languedoc textiles exported by the French merchants. Various systems of trade were followed by the company during the early eighteenth century. From 1713 to 1717 the Eastland Company's practice of "open trade" by single merchants was followed; then from 1717 to 1743 a "well-ordered trade" by a single fleet was the rule. Finally an Act of Parliament threw the Levant trade open, but the company did not formally surrender its charter till 1825. Long before this a "regulated company" had become an anachronism, but the Turkey Company was decidedly less unpopular than the East India Company both in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries. The Turkey Company competed with the East India Company in the importation of raw silk from Persia, but in the seventeenth century it won favour by not exporting bullion, while in the eighteenth century it was argued that its trade re-acted much more favourably on English industries than did that of the rival East India Company. Unfortunately for its members the Turkey Company could not afford to buy from the home Government the support recklessly purchased by their rivals.

¹ This arrangement lasted till 1803.

The African Company.—Perhaps the only real failure among the companies that were re-chartered at the Restoration was the African Company. Earlier attempts to carry out on a commercial scale the slave trade in West Africa begun by Sir John Hawkins had come to grief both under Elizabeth and James I. in the face of competition by Interlopers and the Dutch. The Guinea factories of the earlier African Company were used by the East India Company as places where they might exchange English textiles for native gold, but during the Interregnum the African trade was ruined. However, at the Restoration the Duke of York and Prince Rupert formed a new company in the hope of getting for it a share in the trade of Brazil, which needed slaves. Despite the usual attacks from Interlopers and the usual Dutch competition the company was able to survive a reconstruction in 1672; it changed English textiles for gold, ivory, and dye-stuffs, as well as supplying the necessary slave labour to the planters of the West Indies and America.

After 1688 the company's royal charter was insufficient to protect it against Interlopers and other critics, even if the cost of keeping up the forts and factories had not made it easy for its rivals to undersell it. In 1698 Parliament formally threw the African trade open to any merchant who would pay a duty of 10 per cent. towards the up-keep of the company's establishments. The further misfortunes of the company can be only briefly alluded to here. In 1711 it had to obtain an Act of Parliament allowing it to compound with its creditors; in 1722 it had to make a call of 50 per cent. on its shareholders, and in 1727 each £800 of stock was written down to £100, part at least of the difference having apparently been spent on bribery. Even a subvention of £10,000 a year from the Government in 1730 was not enough, nor did any better

fortune happen when the old joint stock company was bought out in 1750 and replaced by a regulated company with a nominal entrance fee and all its establishment charges paid by the nation.

Causes of its Want of Success.—One reason for these repeated failures, besides the competition of the Interlopers and the Dutch, was that the company's servants engaged in private trade and undersold it; but an even more important cause was the short-sighted policy of the company in demanding from the American planters a monopoly price for the slaves they exported. The company was supported by the home Government as the national agent in the slave trade, but the American planters preferred to buy the cheaper human chattels provided by the Interlopers, caring nothing for the horrors of the "Middle Passage"¹ or the still greater crime of the adventurers who urged on native tribes to fight that captives might be plentiful. When by the Treaty of Utrecht the South Sea Company got the "Asiento," or contract to supply Spanish America with slaves, the African Company found a fresh rival in the Guinea slave trade, and they also had to face fierce competition from the French traders of Senegal. The Slave Trade was abolished by Act of Parliament in 1807, and the African Company itself was dissolved by an Act of 1821; its possessions were vested in the Crown and formed the nucleus of our West African colonies.

The Hudson's Bay Company.—Much more successful was the Hudson's Bay Company, for which Prince Rupert had secured a very wide charter from his cousin Charles II. in 1670. Till his death in 1683 the Prince

¹ The voyage from Africa to America, during which the slaves were kept in close confinement, and often in chains.

was its Governor, and his successor was the Duke of York. It was a flourishing joint stock company during most of its career, and it actually retained its monopoly down to 1869. Probably, however, the favour it received from the home Government may be accounted for by the fact that its forts threatened the French fur trade, which was one of the chief sources of the wealth of French Canada.

Causes of its Prosperity.—The prosperity of the company was due to many causes. In the first place it had a command of shipping superior to that of its French rival, and moreover the sea route to the fur-bearing districts via Fort Churchill on Hudson's Bay was both cheaper and easier than the long land route by Montreal and Quebec.¹ As a result, the heavy fur trade passed largely into the hands of the English, for only the lighter and more valuable furs could profitably make the land route. Another reason for the English company's superior prosperity was that the Indians generally preferred to trade with its factories, because there they could procure powder and firearms; these weapons certainly enabled the Indians to procure more furs and skins, but they sapped the independence of the natives and forced them to rely upon the white men for sustenance. The French traders were further handicapped by the Indian demand for British goods even when trade did take place, and it was not unknown for the British Governor of New York to forbid the sale of the necessary articles to the French traders.

Except in trade the French were far stronger. The rival merchants were always quarrelling, and so successful

¹ It is interesting to observe that a railway is now being built to Hudson's Bay to carry the grain of Manitoba and the North-West to Europe by sea.

had the French been even before the War of the League of Augsburg broke out that they had captured most of the English forts. These were restored at the Peace of Ryswick in 1697, but for the next sixteen years the Hudson's Bay Company fared badly. However, Queen Anne and the Tory Government gave them their support, and by the Treaty of Utrecht the French acknowledged England's rights to the vague Hudson's Bay district. Parliament had confirmed the company's charter for seven years in 1690, and the Interlopers had no chance to compete. The company's profits were certainly large, but the statement that at the time of the parliamentary enquiry of 1749 they were 40 per cent. is probably nearer the fact than the hostile suggestion of 2,000 per cent.

Attacks on the Company.—By 1720, despite considerable outlay on forts and shipping, the original capital of £10,500 had produced assets valued at £94,500. Tempted by the company mania of that year the proprietors were on the point of "watering" their stock when the South Sea Bubble burst and their own scheme had to be abandoned. However, despite the steady profit earned between 1720 and 1749, the Parliamentary Committee of the latter year revealed the company's lack of enterprise, and certain of the merchants of London and Bristol demanded that the trade should be thrown open to more enterprising men. One critic accused the company of not attempting to discover the North-West Passage to China, but a far more serious charge was that the company's methods so limited the supply of skins and beaver-wool that, although the merchants made high profits, the skinners and hatters were unable to obtain a sufficient supply of the raw materials for their trade. Similar charges had been made in 1690 and 1698, and they were

repeated in 1752. Probably the French manufacturers were better served by the French company, but in 1763 French Canada passed finally into England's hands. The rivalry of the French ceased, but the main claim of the Hudson's Bay Company for government help passed with it.

Henceforth the company had to defend its exclusive rights on the ground that trade with the Indians could best be managed through them, but with the growth of settlements in Canada after the American War of Independence the company's claim to reserve all the "North-West" for its own purposes could not be tolerated. One of the first acts of the Dominion of Canada was to insist that the vast area beyond the Great Lakes should be thrown open to settlement, and in 1869 the Hudson's Bay Company bowed to the inevitable. However, it still remains a flourishing joint-stock trading company, and has played a profitable and honourable part in the development of the newer provinces of the Dominion.

The East India Company.—The story of the East India Company in the eighteenth century is one of the romances of empire-building, but for some years after the Revolution of 1688 its future seemed indeed dark. William III. was quite willing to continue royal patronage, but the company realised that under the new régime it was necessary, or at any rate wiser, to obtain parliamentary confirmation of its privileges, *e.g.* its admiralty jurisdiction at Bombay. Sir Josiah Child, its leader, could easily prove the superior advantages of the joint stock over the "regulated" trade in the case of India, but unfortunately it had been proved that the number of shareholders had decreased from 954 in 1617 to only 600 in 1681, and that the company had purchased the favour of Charles II. and James II. by enormous bribes.

selves sent Lord Clive to Bengal in 1765 to put matters on a better footing.

Most of the company's servants had only one ambition—to return to England at the first opportunity with as large a fortune as possible. As a class, they were unpopular in England from the way in which they flaunted their often "ill-gotten wealth."¹ Clive himself confessed on one occasion that the temptations held out to adventurers in India were "such as flesh and blood could not withstand," and he said he "was astonished at his own moderation" when Meer Jaffier, his puppet nawab, displayed to him the riches in the Bengal Treasury. Lesser men had no such scruples; they indulged in private trade, they extorted presents from the helpless natives, and they neglected the interests of the company as consistently as they sought their own advantage. They had, perhaps, the excuse that their pay was small while their work was tedious, and that a prolonged sojourn in India had as an almost inevitable sequel a ruined constitution, if not a premature death.

Anarchy in India.—It was useless for the company to instruct its officials to confine themselves to trade and forbear to meddle in native affairs. The death of the last great Mogul emperor Aurungzebe in 1707 had been the signal for an outburst of anarchy in India. The subahdars (viceroys), the nawabs (governors), and the native Hindoo rajahs plundered each other and were themselves attacked by the Mahratta Confederation—the mountaineers of Central India. The English at Madras and the French East India Company at Pondicherri could no longer count on protection from either the Mogul at Delhi or the local

¹ Macaulay in his Essay on Clive gives a graphic picture of these "nabobs," as they were styled in derision.

nawab of the Carnatic. Dumas, the Governor of Pondicherry, was driven in self-defence to take part in the natives' quarrels, and his successor Dupleix, Clive's great rival, in defiance of orders from Paris, planned to erect a great French Indian Empire by the help of Sepoys or European-drilled natives on the ruins of the former Mogul provinces. The Madras officials of the English company reluctantly took up the challenge, and, by the genius of Clive, England instead of France gained South India. Before that triumph was complete, the senseless cruelty of the boy Nawab of Bengal, Surajah-Dowlah, had called Clive to Calcutta and the tragedy of the "Black Hole of Calcutta" was avenged by the deposition of the nawab after his defeat at Plassey (1757).

Difficulties of the East India Company.—Much against their will and with entirely inadequate resources either of officials or revenue, the East India Company became responsible for the government and defence of Bengal, and, after Munro's victory at Buxar in 1764, of Oudh also; and the fierce and warlike Mahrattas were always ready to dispute with them for their spoils. A trading company which instead of trading had to engage in almost constant war would be inevitably brought face to face with ruin. Even when it triumphed in war the officials rather than the shareholders reaped the benefit. It is impossible here to go into the intricate details of the system of "investments" and "remittances"¹ which was responsible for some of the more flagrant acts of injustice. Let it suffice to say that the company's officials at the three great

¹ "Investments" were the goods sent to England from the sale of which dividends were paid; "remittances" were the sums of money paid into the company's Indian treasuries by people in India who desired that they or their nominees might draw corresponding sums from the English office of the company.

centres of Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta were unable by honest trade alone to raise funds sufficient to provide for the defence of their districts, and also to send home goods or specie to the amount required to pay the loans demanded by the Imperial Government and the high dividends to which the shareholders thought themselves entitled. It was only natural that the officials paid more attention to the demand for money than to the exhortations to treat the natives with humanity.

Lord North's Regulating Act, 1773.—In England the universal belief—quite without foundation, however—was that India was a very rich country.¹ The Imperial Government, in the true spirit of Parliamentary Colbertism, demanded that the company should act as milch-cow to supply the ever-increasing demand for revenue. An Act was passed in 1768 to define the company's obligations to the Government, but it was impossible any longer to conceal the serious financial condition of the company, for which the Directors rather than the shareholders were blamed. The result was the passing in 1773 of Lord North's Regulating Act; despite the strenuous opposition of the company, the Imperial Government took over the appointment of the chief officials, and the Governor-General of Bengal, controlled however by a powerful Council of four, was given vague rights over the Governors of Madras and Bombay. By raising the voting qualification of a shareholder from £500 to £1,000 it was hoped that the Directors would be freed from the temptation to declare high dividends when these had not been earned.

Work of Warren Hastings.—Warren Hastings, a disciple of Clive and at that time Governor of Calcutta, was made

¹ Actually India was very largely a land of agricultural villages and had suffered greatly from wars and famines.

first Governor-General of Bengal. The conditions under which he had to work were quite impossible: the Council was controlled by his bitter enemy Sir Philip Francis, while the authorities at Madras and Bombay were on their own initiative waging war against Hyder ^{*}Ali of Mysore and the Mahrattas respectively, and calling upon him for help. Hastings was a strong man and no stickler for minute legalities. He found the money necessary to equip an army and by a mixture of diplomacy and force he saved British dominion in India. In later years the orators Edmund Burke and R. B. Sheridan painted him to Englishmen as a cruel and unscrupulous tyrant, who had sold an English army to the Nawab of Oudh for the conquest of the warlike Rohillas, had unjustly plundered Cheyt Singh, Rajah of Benares, and had robbed of their treasure the hapless Begums (Princesses) of Oudh. When Hastings was recalled in 1785 he was impeached, but despite the eloquence of Burke and Sheridan he was acquitted, after a trial lasting seven years, though ruined in health and fortune. Far more worthy of impeachment were the ministers and shareholders whose rapacity had ruined Hastings and almost ruined India.

Fox's India Bill.—Burke's attack on Hastings was really the result of a laudable zeal for justice, and in 1783 he persuaded his friend Fox, then the real head of the Portland Ministry, to bring in a Bill which would take the control of India from the company and vest it in a Board of seven Commissioners. Clive himself had vainly urged the elder Pitt to propose that the Imperial Government should formally assume responsibility for the government of India, but Pitt's son was suspicious of Fox's scheme. Fearing that the possession of so much valuable patronage by the Ministry would enable Fox to entrench himself in power by bribery, he championed the cause of

the East India Company, and thanks largely to the intervention of the king, who hated Fox, and to the fears of the other chartered companies the Bill was thrown out by the House of Lords and Fox was forced by the king to resign.

Pitt's India Bill.—William Pitt the Younger, the new Premier, brought in a fresh India Bill in 1784 which secured for the Imperial Government the necessary control over India, while it left the appointment of all but the highest officials to the Directors of the East India Company. Pitt's Bill set up a Board of Control for India with a president having a seat in the Cabinet, which at its own discretion could supersede the Directors, and this system remained substantially unaltered till 1858. Hastings' successor was Lord Cornwallis, who not only carried out his predecessor's plans under happier auspices, but also raised the whole tone of the company's service.

However, the age of the great commercial companies was passing away. Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* had convinced men of the injustice of such monopolies. It was now recognised that "well-ordered trade" meant an exclusive and restricted trade, whereas "open trade," despite obvious drawbacks, meant an expanding trade. The latter was thus the more suitable for a nation whose prosperity came to depend more and more on the export of its manufactures, and Parliament inevitably followed popular opinion. In 1813 trade with India was made free by Parliament. The East India Company obtained its last charter exactly forty years later, but its powers were only to be continued till Parliament should otherwise provide. In 1857 came the Indian Mutiny, and in the following year the territories and powers of the company were transferred to the Crown by Act of Parliament, the President of the Board of Control being superseded by the Secretary of State for India, helped by a council of fifteen members.

2. PARLIAMENTARY REGULATION OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE.

Parliamentary Corruption.—It is doubtful if Parliament was in practice any more fitted for the work of regulating industry and commerce than the king whom it had superseded. Its members took bribes from the royal ministers and later from the king himself, and the richer trading companies after a time found as little difficulty in purchasing charters from Parliament as in former times from the king, quite irrespective of the interests of the nation as a whole. As the king and his Whig ministers from the time of William III. to that of George III. could influence the practically irresponsible House of Commons only by bribery, we are justified in suspecting the motives of their actions. The Tories, who for most of the time were out of office, opposed the system of parliamentary regulation of industry and commerce, and their leading writers such as North, Davenant, and Barbon argued in favour of "free trade."

Rival Economic Ideas of Tories and Whigs.—These Tory writers proposed that the Government should control trade for the benefit of the consumer; then foreign goods would become cheap and easily obtainable in England, instead of being scarce and dear as when trade was regulated in the interests of monopolist importers. The Whigs professed to ask with Colbert, "How does a given kind of foreign trade react on native industries, and what benefit is it to the producers from whom the nation obtains its chief wealth?" However, in practice Whig views on economic policy were largely inspired by their fear of France. They argued that French manufactures, fostered by Colbert's policy, were the chief source of the wealth of France, and that it would therefore be a good

thing to restrict English importation of French goods. Imports from other countries were objected to largely in the interests of the English textile manufacturers, and the strongest objection of all was, perhaps, that felt against the importation of Eastern textiles by the East India Company. Probably the early Whig hostility to that company was due to its being controlled by Tory magnates, and it is hardly unfair to say that the Whig oligarchy definitely adopted parliamentary Colbertism from a desire to cripple alike their French enemies abroad and their Tory rivals at home.

Definition of Mercantilism and Free Trade.—Mercantilism may be briefly defined as State control of industry with a view to producing the maximum of national strength. Colbertism was the policy of producing wealth and so strength by definite legislative protection of home industries against foreign competition, so as to reduce unemployment to a minimum. Free Trade was an economic policy of which the advantages were most fully realised where national feelings and prejudices were least in operation. Its sole aim was the production of the maximum of wealth in the whole world by the "international" division of labour on the lines of economic rather than political groups. It is possible only in an atmosphere of universal peace and cosmopolitanism, and, as the history of the nineteenth century proved, it was contemptuously rejected by both national and political groups who were discontented with their inferiority to England in economic status: they preferred to attempt to copy England's older policy of Colbertism and successful warfare and colonisation.

Certainly after 1688 until late in the eighteenth century England's economic policy was decidedly protectionist. Not only did the House of Commons assume complete

control of the customs, but it also allowed itself direct interference with the course of trade.

The Organisation of the Customs.—Before the Great Rebellion the Crown had the sole control of the customs, which were farmed out to “Customers” at the ports. This was as wasteful as it was unpopular, and the Long Parliament collected the customs through commissioners—a system which lasted till 1670. In 1670 a receiver-general, helped after 1688 by a comptroller-general, was appointed, and the customs were changed from a royal revenue into a fund against which certain portions of the working expenses of the State could be charged. By an Act of 1692 the House of Commons appointed commissioners to investigate administrative corruption, and actually proposed to appoint a permanent Board of Trade to take over the former work of the Privy Council. William III. was not alone in objecting to this attempt of the legislature to meddle with the work of the executive, but he had to compromise by appointing a permanent Board of Trade himself, which automatically fell under the control of the House of Commons. Actually the House of Commons tended to gain more and more power over the king and his ministers by the system of “appropriating” supplies. It was in vain that the ministers in their turn attempted in the eighteenth century to control the members of Parliament by wholesale bribery; administrative corruption steadily declined from the passing of Burke’s Economical Reform Act in 1782.

The Policy of Bounties and Prohibitions.—Burleigh’s system of fostering all elements of power by direct State intervention had ceased to be appropriate after 1688. The revolutionary statesmen professed to encourage only such kinds of trade and commerce as would benefit the State directly or have a healthy effect on its industries. Their

system was one in which bounties and restrictions existed side by side. The House of Commons desired to help agriculture, and so a system of corn bounties was introduced in 1689. It was hoped, and the hope seems to have been largely realised, that a bounty on exported corn would produce a plentiful home supply and steady prices. However, the export of English wool was prohibited¹; partly from the desire that English weavers might always have a plentiful supply of the raw material, but partly also with the intention of handicapping foreign weavers who, it was believed, could not compete with Englishmen in certain branches of the manufacture of cloth unless they could import English wool.

The House of Commons was at a disadvantage in the management of a bounty system in comparison with the old Privy Council: the former had to legislate in general terms, but the Privy Council like the French kings was able to adapt its terms to the varying conditions and prices as they arose, and moreover had local agents—the justices of the peace—who carried out its orders. The House of Commons had even less success with manufactured goods. Monopolies under the Stuarts had cost the Government nothing, but bounties were costly and, as Dr. Cunningham says, “afforded a minimum of advantage to the public at a maximum of cost to the State.” Men made fraudulent claims to bounties, disregarding the conditions laid down, especially in the linen trade and the herring fishery, where the bounty was claimed for “foreign” goods. By putting a premium upon dishonesty and evasion of the law, respect for the law was lowered.

Scientific Protection.—The Tories would have allowed all kinds of commerce and been content merely to aid

¹ As under Charles II. and earlier. See *ante*, pp. 95, 122, 163, 185.

English industries by preferential duties, but the Whigs insisted that trade which did not re-act favourably on English industries should be strictly discouraged. They were abandoning the older idea that the Government should encourage trade that would increase the customs revenue—the root principle of much of the older mercantilism—in favour of what closely resembled modern “scientific protection”: they were desirous of increasing the volume of the national business, and had no wish to secure high prices for individual merchants in foreign markets at the cost of diminishing the amount of exported English manufactures; for that policy would be detrimental to the growth of English industry and so offend against their canons of right economics.

The Causes of the Hostility to Trade with France.—The question of the French trade was the battle-ground of the two theories. The victory of the Whigs was due to political causes rather than to the rightfulness of their economic ideas. Mun’s arguments in favour of the free export of bullion as a means of increasing trade had not been developed in the direction of showing that any “apparent injury to English industry through trade with France was either illusory or indirectly compensated” by the demand for English goods. Dr. Cunningham points out that even Adam Smith’s main argument against mercantilist protectionism was that such gain as did accrue from it was purchased at an absurdly dear rate.

The Act of 1678.—It has been remarked earlier that Cromwell, unlike Burleigh, preferred the French trade because it increased the customs revenue, and Charles II. favoured it for the same reason. However, when in 1667 Colbert’s famous Tariff imposed prohibitory duties on English cloth the London merchants took alarm, and put forward figures which seemed to show that England lost

nearly £1,000,000 annually on her trade with France. The Country Party in Parliament—the forerunners of the Whigs—championed their cause, and at last in 1678 an Act was passed prohibiting trade with France. James II. later managed to have a heavy tariff substituted for prohibition, but after the Revolution the Whigs restored the policy of prohibition, and, despite the large loss to the revenue caused by wholesale smuggling, they professed that they had attained the object of securing the home market to English textile manufacturers. Dr. Cunningham rightly insists that the Act of 1678 marks the beginning of the policy of pure protection criticised most adversely by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations*, which appeared in 1776, just as the effects of that policy on the relations of Great Britain with her colonies were becoming manifest.

The Methuen Treaty, 1703.—The strength of the protectionist feeling in England during this period is well indicated by the very different reception accorded to the Methuen treaty with Portugal (1703) and the proposed commercial treaty with France in 1713.¹ English statesmen were always eager to secure fresh markets for finished cloth or to re-open old markets that had been closed. Portugal had been one of our best customers for cloth, but about 1680 an Irishman had taken over a number of workmen and established in Portugal a weaving industry. As Portugal produced wool herself and desired to find employment for her people, her Government prohibited the importation of foreign-made, and so of English, cloth. Methuen, the English Ambassador, in 1703 persuaded the Portuguese Government to sacrifice

¹ The best account of these treaties is to be found in Hewins' *English Trade and Finance*, pp. 129 *et seqq.*

their promising weaving industry to English competition and to the interests of the wine-growers of the Douro valley, who were politically more important. The bribe offered was that England should protect Portugal from French aggression during the War of the Spanish Succession, and also admit Portuguese wines at two-thirds the duty charged on French wines; if England did not carry out the second clause of the agreement the prohibition of the English manufactures might be renewed.

The "Balance of Trade" Theory.—The Methuen treaty was popular, partly because it seemed likely to injure the French wine trade, but still more because the Portuguese trade led to a flow of treasure into the country. It is easy to ridicule the crude economics of our ancestors, but although it is of course true that in those days, as now, all foreign trade is in its final phase an exchange of goods or services for goods or services, it should be remembered that actual bullion played a far more important part in international trade than it does now: formerly England's main exports were few in number, and the modern mechanism of foreign exchange existed only in a very primitive condition, if at all. It was difficult to carry on trade in a world where, even in Europe, nations were separated by lack of transport facilities either by land or sea, and had in consequence developed an economic life approximating to the Greek ideal of the self-sufficing state. If England desired the produce of countries that would not take her textiles in exchange, she must obtain treasure—the only commodity which these sellers would accept—from such lands as would purchase her textiles and supply her in return with the gold and silver she was herself unable to produce. To quote Professor Hewins: "The theory of the balance of trade was a generalisation reached after crude observation of facts, which it must be

admitted were likely to mislead rather than suggest the underlying principles of foreign trade. The development of finance, the telegraph, and ocean-going steamers have destroyed the conditions which rendered possible the theory of the balance of trade. So far as it went it was a sincere and more or less accurate attempt to solve an intricate problem."

The Proposed French Treaty of 1713.—The negotiations for a commercial treaty with France in 1713 were carried on by a Tory minister and seem to have been quite unsupported by popular opinion. Englishmen generally had no desire for lawful trade with France, where the "balance" was so heavily against them and when they easily obtained the essential minimum by smuggling. Merchants were ready for the sake of increased trade to adopt Portuguese heavy wines in preference to the probably less harmful light French wines, but there was also a moral objection brought against the importation of the dangerously cheap French brandy. Moreover, the blunder of Louis XIV. in revoking the Edict of Nantes had a disastrous two-fold effect on French trade and industry. Not only were Protestant nations turned against a persecuting king, but the Huguenots who escaped to England, Holland, and Prussia brought their crafts with them; it was now possible for England to do without the imported manufactures of glass, silk, linen, and pottery for which she was formerly largely dependent on France.

Bolingbroke, the Tory, desired to reverse the Whig policy of prohibition; he desired to re-open trade with France on the lines of the arrangements of 1664, before the era of high tariffs and prohibitions. French goods, with certain exceptions, were to be imported on paying the duties exacted in 1664, and France was guaranteed the same treatment as that given to the most favoured nation

England in return was to receive reciprocal treatment, and the treaty was to come into force two months after it had been ratified by Parliament. Reciprocity rather than Free Trade defines the nature of this agreement, but parliamentary ratification even by a Tory majority became impossible in the teeth of the opposition that arose from all quarters.

The "**Mercator**" and the "**British Merchant**."—The Levant Company, the silk-weavers, the linen and woollen trades, the shippers and the distillers all raised a cry of ruin if the treaty should be sanctioned. It was pointed out that to give most favoured nation treatment to French wines would imperil the valuable concessions won by the Methuen treaty. It was in vain that the Tory Government subsidised a tri-weekly journal known as the *Mercator*, in which Daniel Defoe, author of *Robinson Crusoe*, argued in favour of Bolingbroke's scheme, and maintained that "England had such an advantage from the character of the raw material available, that she would, by restraining the export of wool, secure to her manufacturers a monopoly of the markets of the world." The anti-French party retaliated by publishing the *British Merchant* twice weekly, in which leading merchants maintained that the French had access to ample supplies of suitable wool from other countries, and urged that it was unwise to accept the treaty. In the end Bolingbroke had to abandon his scheme, and the policy of practical prohibition of French goods lasted down to Pitt's treaty of 1786. Adam Smith said that before the War of American Independence "seventy-five per cent. may be considered as the lowest duty to which the greater part of the goods of the growth, produce or manufacture of France was liable. But upon the greater part of goods these duties are equivalent to a prohibition."

Work of the Whig Financiers.—However, there are certain aspects of Whig economic policy which show a truer sense of statesmanship than the semi-political crusade against French trade. The Whigs were fortunate in producing two great financiers, Montague and Walpole, one at each of the great crises of the party's history, when the fate of the revolutionary settlement hung in the balance; Montague's schemes enabled the war against Louis XIV. to be brought to a successful conclusion by the peace of Ryswick in 1697, while Walpole saved the Hanoverian monarchy at the time of the South Sea Bubble and then, by twenty-two years of good internal government, established it firmly in the hearts of the nation.

The National Debt, 1693.—Louis XIV. had boasted that the last gold coin would win the War of the English Succession, and he felt sure that William III. would never be able to persuade his new subjects to finance a long war. The bankruptcy of Charles II. in 1672 had shaken the royal credit with the goldsmiths, who in the seventeenth century acted as bankers, and William's defeats at sea off Beachy Head (1690) and on land at Steenkirk (1692) had not improved his popularity in England. However, Charles Montague, the Whig Chancellor of the Exchequer, cleverly played upon the fears of the mercantile classes, pointing out that their only alternative to a French invasion was to give strong financial support to William III. The difficulty was that the king personally could offer no security for the loan he required: the taxes were assigned for special purposes by Parliament, and even the Crown lands, worthless though they were at the Revolution, were under the control of Parliament. Montague however, following a Dutch precedent, was able to persuade a group of capitalists to advance a large sum of money on the security

not of the king but of the State, and thus began what is known as the National Debt, 1693.

The Bank of England, 1694.—Next year, 1694, Montague borrowed £1,200,000 on the same security; he made no provision for the repayment of the principal, but only for the annual payment of £100,000 as interest. However, the lenders received a charter constituting them "the Governor and Company of the Bank of England," with the right "to trade solely in bills of exchange, bullion, and forfeited pledges." Probably Montague was largely indebted for this scheme to William Paterson the Scotsman, author of the later Darien scheme, the failure of which has rather unfairly affected his reputation as a thinker and economist.

Advantages of the New System.—National banks and national debts were not unknown in other European countries. The Bank of Genoa had been established in 1409 to finance the State debts, but the Bank of Venice (1587) and the Bank of Amsterdam (1609) were rather commercial in origin. The idea of a national bank was for a long time not popular in England, for men said it was more fitted for a republic than for a monarchy; the fear was lest the group of moneyed men who controlled the bank might grow too powerful and control both king and parliament. However, the advantages of the new system outweighed its defects. The State now saved the money formerly lost when discounting taxes which by its poverty it had been compelled to anticipate; it now possessed an easy way of raising money for war and of making posterity share the burdens of wars waged partly in its interest; the regular payment of the interest to the lenders, who were largely Whigs, strengthened them, and so constitutional government, against their rivals the Tories and the chances of a Jacobite restoration; moreover, it secured the moneyed

interest permanently on William's side, for a Jacobite king would probably repudiate the debts of the revolutionary Government; and, as the bankers had little money invested abroad, they were able, as are the German bankers of to-day, to support a system of protection at home.

Its Drawbacks.—The drawbacks of the system of national debts were mainly two: it tempted ministers to extravagance and to saddle posterity with too large a proportion of the cost of the various wars, and yet the succession of wars caused the annual charges on account of the national debt to mount so rapidly that this increased interest could only be met by a corresponding increase of taxation. The wiser statesmen realised the danger of this heavy pressure of taxation; the remedies proposed ranged from a drastic scheme to appropriate one-tenth of all real and personal property to pay off the whole debt while it was still of manageable proportions to the more orthodox and less heroic expedient of a sinking fund. It was urged on behalf of the former that the resulting revival of trade and the ultimate decrease of taxation would amply compensate for any temporary inconvenience. However, the rival scheme of the sinking fund found more favour with Sir Robert Walpole, the first Chancellor of the Exchequer really able to deal with the problem.

The Sinking Fund.—The principle of the sinking fund is to set aside the proceeds of certain taxes each year, for the purpose of buying back in the open market and extinguishing as much as possible of the debt. Walpole certainly managed to reduce both the debt and the rate of interest paid on it, but fresh debts were contracted, and then rather than increase the burden of taxation he began the system of charging upon the sinking fund other items than interest on the debt. After the failure of the Excise Scheme in 1733, the sinking fund was so completely turned

from its ostensible purpose that by 1739, "after seventeen years of profound peace, the whole sum paid off was no more than £8,328,000, leaving a capital debt just short of £47,000,000."

The New Coinage and the Land Bank.—William III.'s Whig ministers also successfully carried through the issue of a new coinage in 1696, thanks largely to the help of Sir Isaac Newton, the great mathematician, and thus cemented still more firmly the alliance between their master and the mercantile community. Their success was in startling contrast to the failure of the Land Bank set up in the same year by their Tory rivals and to the failure of the Scottish merchants' Darien Scheme in 1699. Perhaps the former failure was largely due to an unwise over-capitalisation of the land, but even under the new valuation of 1692 the land tax at four shillings in the pound pressed heavily on the Tory gentry and made them feel that in comparison with the mercantile classes they got little assistance from the State. The rival institution, the Bank of England, promptly made William III. a fresh advance of money, and the Whig House of Commons showed itself so determined to support him and the war that he could afford to disregard Tory hostility until, after the Peace of Ryswick, a Tory House of Commons came into power.

Failure of the Darien Scheme.—The second failure, that of the Darien Company, was due partly perhaps to the inexperience of the directors, and partly to want of sufficient capital and sufficient settlers of the right kind, but the Scots believed, probably with some truth, that the root cause was the open hostility of the English Government and merchants. The author of the scheme, which dated from 1695, was William Paterson, the mentor of Montague, and he rightly understood the magnificent prospects of the free port which he proposed to establish on the Isthmus of

Darien or Panama. Unfortunately the company was content with a charter from the Scottish Parliament alone, and the directors underrated the hostility of the Spaniards who claimed the Isthmus, as well as the hostility of the English trading companies, especially the East India Company, whose monopolies were threatened by their ambitious schemes. Attacked by the Spaniards and by disease, and helped scarcely more by the Scottish than by the English Government, the settlements collapsed, and Scotland, threatened with ruin, in turn threatened England with secession from the Union.¹ The only alternative she would accept was equal trading rights, and, thanks to Godolphin's diplomacy and to lavish bribery, the Parliaments of England and Scotland were united in 1707 on the basis of perfect free trade between the two countries. The Darien shareholders were compensated and the new commercial and industrial Scotland was born.

Davenant's Excise Scheme.—Both Whigs and Tories after the Revolution agreed that additional revenue must be found, but they differed greatly as to method. As has already been indicated, the Tories rightly complained that William III.'s ministers favoured the Whig mercantile classes, and they were unable to see that their own Land Bank had largely failed because they had valued land on a basis of one hundred years' purchase instead of upon the more reasonable rate of twenty years' purchase. Davenant, the Tory economist, accordingly proposed a re-adjustment of the taxes upon commodities, so that all classes should be compelled to contribute according to their ability:

¹ It should be remembered that only the Crowns and not the Parliaments of the two kingdoms were united in 1603. In 1703 the Scottish Parliament threatened to choose a separate king on Anne's death.

naturally he believed that under existing conditions the landed classes were paying more than their share. Davenant would perhaps have preferred that the burden should be shifted on to the Whigs by an income tax on invested money, but his alternative scheme was an extension of the excise on the lines of that which Pym, copying an abortive proposal by the advisers of Charles I., actually introduced during the Civil War. It was to be graduated and the assizes of bread and beer were to be enforced so as to keep down prices.

Locke.—Locke, the Whig writer, maintained however that as all taxation ultimately fell on land, to levy it first on commodities would only cause useless disturbance. Other opponents pointed out that the excise had always been granted to the Crown, and that an extension of the system would lessen the dependence of the Crown on Parliament. Actually Davenant's scheme was adopted only in part, but the taxes on malt and leather under William III., and those on candle-making, soap, painted calicoes, and starch under Anne, and the Newspaper Stamp Act and the duty on advertisements of a later date, were practically excise duties on home commodities.

The South Sea Company.—Far greater as a financier than either Montague or Davenant was Sir Robert Walpole. He had already shown his ability as Chancellor of the Exchequer by launching his sinking fund in 1717, when a fortunate quarrel with his colleagues deprived him of any responsibility for the South Sea Bubble. The South Sea Company, founded by Harley in 1711, in anticipation of the trade with Spanish America which was to flourish when the coming peace with Spain was made, was not in itself a foolish conception. By the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) England was allowed to send one ship of 600 tons burden yearly to trade with Panama, and by the famous

"Asiento" clause she also received the profitable monopoly of supplying negro slaves to Spanish America. However, the new Bourbon king (Philip V.) of Spain not only did not carry out these promises of the treaty, but under the guidance of his minister Alberoni adopted an anti-English policy which ended in the destruction of the Spanish fleet off Cape Passaro in Sicily (1718) and a fruitless Spanish-Jacobite invasion of Scotland (1719). Peace was made in 1720 and the South Sea Company now had its chance.

The actual failure of the company was not due merely to bad management, but to a mania for speculation which at this time broke out in England and also in France.¹ The Whig ministers in 1720 passed through Parliament the South Sea Act, which had for its object the repayment of part of the National Debt by allowing the national creditors to receive instead of cash an equivalent portion of South Sea stock, which bore a higher rate of interest. As the company had secured the "Asiento" contract to supply Spanish America with slaves and was always engaged in what men thought was the profitable whale fishery, its shares were eagerly purchased and the £100 shares soon changed hands at £1,000. Other joint stock companies were formed: some of them could never hope to pay a dividend, while others were so obviously swindles that the South Sea Company in self-defence had to prosecute them. At once men were seized with a panic of fear as unreasonable as their former optimism, and South Sea stock fell rapidly to £135, with the result that thousands were ruined.

¹ In France the Mississippi Company of John Law the Scotsman corresponded to the English South Sea Company, but the Regent Orleans was far more to blame for the financial disaster that ensued than were either Stanhope or his colleagues.

Walpole the financier, seeing that inexperienced men were confusing wealth with credit, which is merely the opportunity of acquiring wealth if circumstances remain favourable, had warned his fellow-countrymen against their boundless optimism, but when they would not heed he had quietly made large profits for himself by speculation. When the crash came his wise advice was remembered, and the terrified Whigs looked to him as the only man able to stave off a Jacobite revolution. Stanhope had probably been guilty of nothing worse than carelessness, for which he in part atoned by his tragic death, but the younger Sunderland, Craggs, and Aislalie deserved their fate, and the directors of the company were justly prosecuted and deprived of their ill-gotten gains.

Walpole's Fiscal Policy.—Walpole's triumph and the wave of popularity which enabled him to become in fact, if not in name, the first English Prime Minister belong rather to general history. England was fortunate in finding so able a leader in the crisis. All Walpole's tariff schemes were devised with the direct object of benefiting national industry, and not, as had so often been the case, only of increasing the revenue. He was of course not a "free trader" in any real sense of the term, but an "enlightened mercantilist" who was content to find the increased revenue he needed in the yield to be obtained from an increased volume of trade. It has been said of him that "he found our Book of Rates the worst and he left it the best in Europe." In the first king's speech for which he was responsible, that of 1721, occurred this remarkable paragraph: "We should be extremely wanting to ourselves if we neglected to improve the favourable opportunity given us of extending our commerce, upon which the riches and grandeur of this nation chiefly de-

pend. It is very obvious that nothing would more conduce to the obtaining of so public a good, than *to make the exportation of our own manufactures, and the importation of the commodities used in the manufacturing of them, as practicable and as easy as may be.*"

The words above italicised describe clearly the fiscal policy of Walpole, and in the ensuing session he prevailed on Parliament to remove the export duties on 106 articles of British manufacture and the import duties on thirty-eight articles of raw material. Just as the creation of the Bank of England had rallied the moneyed classes to the Whigs, so Walpole's reforms secured to the Hanoverian succession the support of the manufacturers. Walpole's policy towards the Colonies is better dealt with later; it may suffice to say that he interfered as little as possible, and then only to modify in their favour the working of the Navigation Acts. Indeed, it may be said that in England also he was most successful when he contented himself with modifying the restrictions of the older policy of State control. If, as in the case of the famous Excise Bill of 1733, he attempted to introduce fresh regulations, however salutary, he found himself face to face with opposition which cannot wholly be laid to the charge of his political enemies.

Walpole's Excise Bill, 1733.—The Excise Bill of 1733 is often misunderstood. In his desire to help British commerce Walpole desired to encourage the growth of the British mercantile marine by all possible means, especially as he seems to have had less faith in the Navigation Acts than most Whigs. In his endeavour to make the whole island "one general free port and magazine and store-house for all nations" he intended a gradual extension of the excise until he had abolished import duties on foreign goods in favour of excise duties on their consumption in England.

One of his earliest fiscal reforms had been a provision that tea, coffee, and chocolate might be imported free of charge if they were stored in bonded warehouses; the duty was only payable when the owner of the goods sold them for consumption in England. Not only did this system help traders by making fewer demands on their capital, but also it largely increased the revenue. His plans for extending the excise both to all imported goods and to home productions such as salt were violently attacked, despite an able pamphlet by Walpole in which he exposed the drawbacks of the existing system and explained the advantages of the proposed alterations.

Unfair Criticism of the Scheme.—In his eagerness to avoid opposition if possible, Walpole confined the actual Bill of 1733 to a proposal to convert the import duty on tobacco into an excise duty on its consumption. However, the word “excise” brought back unpleasant memories of the inquisitorial system under the Long Parliament; the opposition newspaper, *The Craftsman*, edited by Pulteney and Bolingbroke, fanned the flame of dissatisfaction by all means fair and unfair. Its writers accused Walpole of aiming at arbitrary power by a scheme “to load food, clothing, and all the other necessities of life” with a general and crushing excise. Men were told that their homes might be entered at every hour by an excise officer, one of a band whose votes would place Walpole permanently in power and make Englishmen as subservient to the Government as Continental peoples. Even the loyalty of the soldiers wavered at last, and everywhere was the cry “No slavery, no excise, and no wooden shoes!”

Results of Walpole's Failure.—Walpole bowed before the storm and withdrew the Bill, saying that he would not be the minister to enforce taxes at the expense of blood. Actually the Tories injured themselves, for Walpole had

hoped for an increase of revenue from the scheme which would allow him to decrease or perhaps even abolish the land tax. Like a wise statesman Walpole realised the unfair character of the land tax, which fell with equal weight on good and bad land alike. However, the period of almost incessant war that ensued on his fall made reforms in taxation impossible, and the fiscal arrangements remained in favour of the manufacturers. Perhaps it was a good thing that Walpole's experiment failed, for capitalists, favoured by the existing system, were able to take advantage of the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century. Indirectly too the nation benefited; Walpole's policy, both successful and unsuccessful, was largely responsible for the enormous growth of the nation's wealth which enabled statesmen, and especially the younger Pitt, to finance the long wars against France and to build up the new Colonial Empire, as well as to establish freely the independence and prosperity of the nation.

It was the irony of fate that Walpole survived the loss of his excise scheme only to lose power for the unsuccessful conduct of the war with Spain, which he had done his best to prevent. If Captain Jenkins really did lose his ear by the violence of a Spanish coastguard, Walpole could have no sympathy either with him or other smugglers. There can be no doubt that in practice English traders flagrantly disregarded the limitations imposed by the Treaty of Utrecht on their trading with Spanish America. ♣ England had barred the rest of the world from her American and West Indian plantations by similar restrictions. Perhaps if Walpole had been allowed by popular opinion to solve commercial questions by negotiation instead of by war we should have been spared the revolt of the American colonies, whose success was largely dependent on the help of England's commercial rivals.

3. BREAK-DOWN OF THE SYSTEM.

Parliamentary Colbertism and the Colonies.—It was natural that the American colonists should dislike the unfavourable position assigned to them under the system of Parliamentary Colbertism, although so long as they were in danger from the French and the Indians they had to profess to accept it. From the foundation of the colonies English traders had assumed a right to monopolise the colonial market and to be the sole channel of European trade with the colonists. After the Revolution such companies as survived were of little use to Parliament in regulating the colonial trade with America, and the favourite policy was that of strengthening the Navigation Acts. Ships were registered, and ship-owners had to enter into bonds not to carry cargoes save to destinations approved by the Government; practically only England was available.

The "Enumerated" Products.—By the Act of 1660 colonial products were divided into two classes: fish, cereals, and timber, the chief exports of New England, were "unenumerated" and could be exported anywhere; but tobacco (Virginia), rice and cotton (the Carolinas), sugar (the West Indies), and naval stores (all colonies) were "enumerated" and could only be sent to England. Rice and naval stores were added to the enumerated list only in 1706. After the Act of 1696 these restrictions were stringently enforced, and the colonists felt more aggrieved. However, in 1730 Walpole allowed the rice of Georgia and Carolina to be exported direct to any port in Europe south of Cape Finisterre in Spain, provided that the ships and crews used were British. In a few years the rice of Egypt and North Italy had been largely driven out of the market.

The West Indian Trade.—The West Indies were the most favoured of the plantations, and their trade was developed in England's favour both on economic and political grounds. Walpole was very well disposed towards them, and shortly before his fall he allowed the West Indian traders to export sugar direct to foreign countries if British ships were used. "A dozen years before Walpole went to the Treasury the whole trade with the plantations—about £1,300,000 both export and import—was only a few thousand pounds more under the head of export, and it was a third less in import, than that which was carried on with Jamaica alone five and twenty years after Walpole left the Treasury. In the same interval the total export trade from England with all the world had risen from six million pounds a year to more than twelve millions."¹

Walpole's Colonial Policy.—Walpole's interest in the prosperity of the colonies was not due to any expectations of raising a direct revenue from them. The story is often quoted of his reply to a suggestion of an ex-colonial official that, as the Excise Bill had failed, he should tax the American colonists: "No, I have Old England set against me, and do you think I will have the New England likewise?" In 1739 he refused a similar suggestion, and maintained that "his object had always been to encourage colonial commerce, because the greater the prosperity of the colonies the greater would be their demand for English goods; and that was the true way to turn colonies into a source of wealth to the mother-country." As Burke put it, "Walpole treated the colonies with salutary neglect." Perhaps Newcastle, the minister

¹ Quoted in Morley's *Walpole*, p. 168, from Burke's *Observations on the Present State of the Nation*.

nominally responsible for colonial matters, carried the neglect too far when he allowed the various despatches sent by the American Governors to be unopened for years.

The Colonists assert their Rights.—Georgia, the last of the American colonies to be chartered, was founded in 1732, but during the first half of the eighteenth century actual emigration to the colonies from England had grown less and less, and yet this was the period when the most vexatious restrictions were being imposed on the colonists. Under Walpole the actual work of the Board of Trade was very slight,¹ but we find that the colonists in their Assemblies were becoming as assertive of their rights as the home Government. For example, the Assembly of New York for many years refused to vote a revenue, while New York, Massachusetts, and Virginia all claimed the right to tax imports from England. The colonial Acts of this nature were vetoed even under Walpole. The Legislatures of Virginia, Barbados, and Jamaica all at different times between 1701 and 1716 claimed the right to approach the home Government otherwise than through the Governor. The utmost concession allowed was that the Governor might be passed by when the colonial legislature were complaining of his personal conduct, and the Assemblies were warned not to claim new privileges which trenched on the King's prerogative.

Restrictive Imperial Legislation.—The actual legislation of the Imperial Parliament was with few exceptions not in the interest of the colonists. When the Naval Stores Act of Anne² expired in 1726 the new Act was not

¹ It did not become a Permanent Committee of the Privy Council till 1786.

² The Act gave a bounty on the importation of certain "naval stores" from the colonies.

passed till 1729. About the same date other Acts encouraged the growth and culture of raw silk and the making of potashes in the colonies by admitting them free of duty into England. However, these Acts were calculated to turn the attention of the colonists to the production of raw materials useful to England. The simplest manufactures of iron were forbidden in the colonies by a Bill of 1719, following on a resolution of the House of Commons that "the erecting of manufactures in the colonies tended to lessen their dependence upon Great Britain." As might be expected, the Bill had to be abandoned in favour of duties imposed on all American iron imported into England. When in 1750 these duties were repealed, it was done so ungraciously that the Act provided that "no mill or other engine for slitting or rolling of iron, or any plating forge to work with a tilt-hammer, or any furnace for making steel," should be used in the colonies. Even less excusable was the Act of 1732 which forbade any colonist in a land where furs were plentiful to export hats to England or elsewhere, even to another colony, and only allowed him to make hats for use in his own colony if he had served a seven years' apprenticeship.

The New Englanders and the Navigation Acts.—Probably British statesmen cared less for the New England colonies than for any of the rest, but those colonies gained most from the Navigation Acts. The latter had been designed primarily to help English shipping, but, thanks to natural advantages in an age of wooden ships, ship-building flourished in New England more than in the mother-country, especially when after 1707 Parliament ceased its attempt to "press" colonial seamen for the Navy. The New Englanders defied the monopoly of the East India Company, and also damaged its trade by

shameful privateering. They steadily defeated attempts to put the Navigation Acts into practice in New England, and carried on a profitable trade with the French West Indies as formerly with the Dutch of New York. Moreover, they practically monopolised the rich Newfoundland fisheries. It was found impossible to prevent the contraband trade in rum, sugar, and molasses with the French West Indies, but in 1733, when Walpole conferred upon Carolina and Georgia the privileges already referred to, he passed the Molasses Act, which allowed the trade on payment of a duty. The New Englanders steadily disregarded the Act in practice, but they cherished it as a grievance.

Growing Alienation of the Colonists.—It is always a dangerous situation when from self-interest, if not in self-defence, large classes of people become flouters of law and established authority, and there can be no doubt that the selfishness of the mercantile classes, which made them press the above-mentioned measures through the Imperial Parliament, led to the growing coldness felt by the colonials towards the Motherland, which was commented upon by foreigners long before the time of Grenville's Stamp Act. Among the colonists in the eighteenth century, especially in the Middle States, were many Dutch, Germans, and French, who could not be expected to support with any great enthusiasm the English connection. There were also a certain number of discontented Irish settlers in Carolina, and even in Virginia the orator Patrick Henry found his extremist speeches not unpopular. In New England Samuel Adams, of Boston, represented the type of ambitious colonial politician who desired that the colonies should have more rights of self-government, if not actual independence of Great Britain, in order that such men as himself might find a wider scope for their abilities.

Mistaken View of Bancroft.—In 1748 the Duke of Newcastle was succeeded by the Duke of Bedford as “Secretary for the Southern Department,” to which fell the care of the colonies. Bancroft, the American historian, is certainly wrong in dating from this change “a regular conspiracy against the liberties of the American colonies,” for Bedford was scarcely more capable than Newcastle of carrying out a definite plan. Professor Egerton is inclined to trace to the ambition of Halifax, who became head of the Board of Trade in 1748, the greater attention paid to the American colonies after that date, although he doubts the existence of any definite plan. The long quarrels of the colonial Assemblies with the royal Governors led the former to look upon their usurpation of authority as undoubted rights, and in practice the Governor, thanks to Newcastle’s supineness, had less and less power; in Massachusetts the Assembly, by a show of conciliation, won the right of voting to the Governor, instead of a permanent salary, a mere annual grant which they could withdraw if he proved recalcitrant (1735).

Quarrels between the Governors and the Assemblies.—There is no occasion to maintain either that the Governors were incipient tyrants or that the colonial Assemblies were merely selfish and factious. The former had to obey the orders of the home Government, which neither understood nor cared for the true interests of the colonies, but saw in them only a source of patronage and profit; as the Governors were not always able men fit to withstand the double pressure of the home Government and the colonial Assembly, and still less often devoted to the interests of their charge, they were inclined to lean on the home Government and make complaints not always in the most dignified way against the Assembly they could not

manage. As for the Assemblies, it was the feeling that they were not looked upon as real legislatures that made them so assertive in their attitude towards the Executive. They could be led or cajoled by a skilful Governor such as Shirley, who was Governor of Massachusetts during the War of the Austrian Succession and sympathised with the desire of the colonials to retain their conquest of Cape Breton. Democratic local government by a system of town meetings gave the New Englanders an independence of the central authority that was far from common in England in the eighteenth century, where the unrepresentative Quarter Sessions of the justices of the peace governed the counties as completely as the unrepresentative Parliament governed the country.

Grievances of the Colonists.—Practically each colony had its own grievances against the royal governor or the "Proprietors" to whom the king had originally granted certain of the colonies. However, all of them, especially the commercial middle states, felt the inconvenience of the old colonial system, especially of the various Navigation Acts, which they blamed for the depreciation of their paper money: as they were in practice allowed to export only raw materials and had to import manufactured goods from England they seemed always in debt. Vague ideas of the possibility of repudiating their debts by severing the connection with England occurred to some of the extremists. In course of time the Puritan New Englanders found another grievance in the proposal to consecrate bishops for the numerous Anglicans who were to be found mainly in Virginia, but to some extent in New England also.

Aggressive Policy of the French in Canada.—However, until the Peace of Paris (1763) the colonials feared the aggression of the French even more than they disliked the

system of the Navigation Acts, and with good reason. In numbers the French were far inferior to the English settlers, but they possessed the advantage of centralised control, so useful for purposes of aggression. The French governors of Canada proposed to link up that colony with the southern French colony of Louisiana by a chain of forts along the St. Lawrence, the Great Lakes, the Ohio, and the Mississippi. The French have always been successful in conciliating native races, and the Indians saw in them merely soldiers and hunters, who seemed far less dangerous to them than the English settlers, who desired to turn Indian hunting-grounds into farms. Even when certain Indian tribes did prefer English to French dominion little was done to occupy the territory effectively.

The Building of Fort Duquesne, 1754.—To the English settlers opposition to French aggression in the Ohio Valley was a matter of life or death. Their existing settlements were crowded in between the Alleghany Mountains and the sea, and access to the fertile lands on the left bank of the Mississippi was barred in the south by marshes or fierce Indian tribes. In the north Virginians and New Englanders were already pushing into the fertile Ohio Valley and a British fort existed near the modern Pittsburg. However, the French disregarded this prior claim and built Fort Duquesne on the land claimed by the English (1754). Benjamin Franklin was then an enthusiastic loyalist, and at the Congress of Albany, to which representatives were sent by various colonies in 1754 on the invitation of the British Government, he backed up the plan of the latter that all the colonies should contribute to a central fund for mutual defence. Unfortunately there was no love lost between the separate colonies, and the timid Newcastle, now Premier, did not accept the suggestion of certain American governors that the home

authorities should tax the Americans for their own defence.

The Albany Congress.—Perhaps in their fear of the French the various colonies would have acquiesced in a reasonable scheme of united action under the authority of an Imperial Act of Parliament, but Newcastle made no attempt to carry out the recommendation¹ of the Albany Congress that the colonies should henceforth be ruled by a royal governor, assisted by a grand council elected by the assemblies of the different colonies: each colony was to have members in proportion to its population and the grand council was to be entrusted with adequate powers both for defence and taxation. It is true that the assent of the various colonies to the scheme would have had to be obtained by a mixture of tact and firmness which Newcastle was quite incapable of showing, but his half-measure of appointing the incompetent General Braddock commander-in-chief in America, with instructions to persuade the colonies to agree to a common fund for defence, was worse than useless.

The Colonial Problem after 1763.—There is no need to tell here in any detail the dismal story of Braddock's failure at Fort Duquesne in 1755, or to trace the marvellous revival of British fortunes when Newcastle was succeeded by William Pitt, who knew how to make "trade flourish by means of war." Fort Duquesne was recaptured and renamed Pittsburg in the minister's honour, and before Pitt was forced to resign by George III. in 1761 he had torn both Cape Breton and all Canada from the French, thanks to the daring of Amherst and Wolfe. The colonists played their part well: they had confidence in Pitt and he in them, and despite the seeming wisdom of Montcalm's

¹ Mainly the scheme of Franklin.

prophecy that the conquest of French Canada would in the end cost England her American colonies, it is probable that had Pitt remained in office, or even if he had succeeded Grenville in 1765, he might have placed the relationship of Britain and her colonies on a better footing. The weaknesses of past ministers had given the colonists the chance to usurp the self-government which should have been freely granted as in 1841, and all the legal control left to the mother-country was the right to enforce the hated Navigation Acts.

Governor Pownall's Scheme.—However, instead of a patriotic large-minded statesman such as Pitt, with all his faults, undoubtedly was, the minister with whom the colonists had to deal after the Peace of Paris was the narrow-minded legal pedant George Grenville. He was quite unable to enter into the dreams of Governor Pownall, who in his book *The Administration of the Colonies* proposed that the colonists and the people of the home land should enter into an imperial partnership and that the colonies should send representatives to Westminster. Pownall accepted the commercial doctrines of the time, but he believed that trade among the members of "a grand marine empire" would be more satisfactory and lasting than trade with jealous commercial rivals.

Policy of George Grenville.—Grenville's American policy was three-fold: "To improve and enforce the laws relating to trade with the colonies, to establish a British army for their protection, and for this purpose to obtain a settled revenue." The first of these reforms was certainly needed, since it cost between £7,000 and £8,000 to collect a revenue of from £1,000 to £2,000. Customs officials were few, and were often absentees. Grenville proposed both to enforce the existing laws such as the Molasses Act of 1733 and also to make new ones. It is

true that he really did desire the Americans to vote additional revenues of themselves, but he made it clear that if they did not vote the necessary money the Imperial Parliament would. It is also true that he sugared the pill by granting bounties on colonial exports, but he could not or would not understand that the Stamp Act imposed in 1765 was looked upon by the Americans as an unwarrantable extension of the very system of imperial control which they on the contrary sought to have diminished. Franklin put the matter in a nutshell: "The (British) Parliament has a power to make all laws for us, or it has a power to make no laws for us."

The Stamp Act and its Result.—The Seven Years' War was really waged to secure the American and the Indian markets against France in the interests alike of England and the colonies. The Peace of Paris provided an opportunity for re-organising the commercial relations between the colonists and the mother-country. Grenville's Stamp Act was not merely a stretching of the old right of imperial control, perhaps technically within legal limits, but it was an unnecessary and provocative emphasising of the view that the colonies existed merely for the benefit of the mother-country. The repeal of the Stamp Act by Grenville's successor, Rockingham, in 1766 was not enough, more especially as it was accompanied by the Declaratory Act which affirmed the right of the Imperial Parliament to legislate for the colonies in commercial matters. The question had long passed out of the region of written law. The agitation against the Stamp Act in New York is said to have been largely fostered by rich merchants and lawyers from interested motives, but they soon found themselves unable to control the reign of mob law that resulted. The influence of English merchants who feared for their trade had procured the repeal of the Stamp Act,

and perhaps had the Imperial Parliament been really representative in 1766 it might have been possible to meet the wishes of that great body of moderate opinion in America, perhaps half the total population, represented by men of the type of George Washington. This party asked not for separation, but for a full recognition of the colonial charters: Pitt supported their view that there should be no taxation without representation, but although there seems to have been no deep feeling against colonial representation in the corrupt Imperial Parliament, Franklin was probably correct when he wrote in 1766 that the offer once welcome was by that time looked upon as no great boon and might before long be refused altogether.

The Attitude of George III.—However, in times of excitement moderate men fail to obtain a hearing, and the small section of the colonists, especially strong in New England, who desired complete independence grew larger thanks to the blunders of the king and his ministers. The other extreme section known as the United Empire Loyalists, probably numbering one third of the whole population at first, lost ground before the unyielding attitude of the king, and had to pay for the very actions they often deplored. Perhaps the best policy after 1766 would have been for the British Government frankly to abandon the plan of taxing the colonists by a vote of the English Parliament. As Burke at a later date wisely said, such taxation however legal in theory was certainly not expedient. Unfortunately Pitt had scarcely succeeded Rockingham when his health broke down, but it is doubtful whether even his attempt to distinguish between justifiable external taxation and unjustifiable internal taxation would have contented the colonists. The brilliantly unwise Charles Townshend, Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1767,

re-awakened the partly slumbering quarrel by his American Import Duties Bill.

The American Import Duties Act.—The Act as finally passed put a duty on all tea, glass, paper, and painters' colours imported into the American colonies: the plan was undoubtedly to raise a revenue by taxing such things as were indispensable to every-day life, so that the Americans would be compelled to submit, as they could not otherwise obtain the articles. Had revenue alone been his object he could have taxed the goods as exported from Great Britain, and perhaps the opposition would have been less. As it was, the Americans saw in his action a revival of the old claims, and the men of Massachusetts, who were already quarrelling with the royal governor, took the leading part. Townshend died soon after the Act had been passed and his successor at the Exchequer, Lord North, became Premier in 1770. In March 1770 North wisely repealed all the new duties except that on tea, but with a lamentable misunderstanding of the colonial point of view he promised further concessions if the colonists behaved themselves.

Benjamin Franklin joins the Extremists.—The colonies now drew closely together for defence, and Virginia soon rivalled New England in resisting interference by the home Government. There had already been outbreaks of lawlessness at Boston and elsewhere, when in 1772 the incompetent Colonial Secretary, Lord Hillsborough, was succeeded by the more conciliatory Lord Dartmouth. Unfortunately Governor Hutchinson had written a letter recommending an abridgement of colonial liberties. This letter was "procured" and published by Franklin, who was then one of the colonial agents in England. The result was two-fold: Franklin was severely rated by the Privy Council for his action, and, unscrupulous as he was

able, he became a bitter foe henceforth of the British connection and eventually carried out the fatal alliance of France and the colonists: the other result was to convince many even of the moderate party among the colonials that George III. meant to carry out Hutchinson's advice by armed force.

The Boston "Tea Party."—Probably George III. had not at that time formed any such plan, but circumstances played into the hands of the clever extremists at Boston. North, wishing to help the East India Company and at the same time to tempt the Americans to break their self-denying ordinance not to drink any tea on which duty had been paid, allowed the company's tea ships to sail directly from India to Boston. Probably his scheme would have succeeded had not a band of imitation Indians upset the tea chests into Boston Harbour. The moderates on both sides of the Atlantic were alarmed for the consequences, especially when George III., casting discretion to the winds, proceeded to punish all Massachusetts for the crime of a few extremists. The Boston Port Act closed Boston Harbour and removed the custom house to Salem, and the constitution of Massachusetts was annulled. These "Intolerable Acts" did not stand alone: an unsympathetic soldier, General Gage, was sent to Boston with a large army, and he was given power to transfer dangerous persons to England for trial (1774).

The Philadelphia Congress, 1774.—As might be expected, many of the other colonies protested against the treatment of Massachusetts, and, trembling for their own charters, twelve out of the thirteen colonies sent delegates to a congress at Philadelphia to organise joint action (1774). It is significant that this congress was willing to accept the "operation of such Acts of Parliament as are *bona fide* restrained to the regulation of our external com-

merce, for the purpose of securing the common advantages of the whole empire to the mother-country and the common benefit of its respective members, excluding every idea of taxation, internal or external, for raising a revenue on the subjects of America without their consent."

Chances of Reconciliation.—Professor Egerton has made it clear that George III. was the real obstacle to any workable agreement, for he was opposed to self-government either in England or in the colonies. Even in 1774 the idea of armed rebellion was only popular with a small minority of the people, and at first the great majority of the rebel army consisted of newcomers mainly Irishmen. Of the discipline and fighting value of that army the correspondence of John Adams of New England and of George Washington of Virginia expresses a like poor opinion. So unwilling were most of the colonists, especially in the prosperous middle states, to take a personal part in the fighting that the Congress of 1774 only just failed to pass a scheme for "establishing a British and American Legislature for the administration of American affairs."

Galloway's Scheme.—The party loyal to the British connection, especially men like Governor Pownall, Galloway, a member of the Congress of 1774, and the famous churchman Samuel Seabury worked hard to avoid separation. Pownall clung to his scheme of colonial representation in the Parliament at Westminster on the lines of the union with Scotland in 1707. Galloway's plan was much bolder and a curious anticipation in many respects of the system of self-governing Dominions. Every form of commercial restraint and colonial disability was to be removed, and an American branch of the Imperial Parliament was to be set up, incorporated with the latter for the purpose of taxation and general regulations. There was to be a

local legislature for the domestic affairs of each province, but the new "British and American Legislature" would treat all Britons alike, wherever their home, and so avoid disputes as to taxation without representation. The American branch of the legislature was to be presided over by a President-General appointed by the king and holding office during his good pleasure. There were minute rules for avoiding friction between the two branches of the Legislature. It should be observed in passing that Galloway's scheme did not recognise the growing power of the Cabinet and Prime Minister any more clearly than did the framers of the American Constitution, and that the conception of the Empire as a federation of self-governing federations was impossible before the rise to nationhood of Canada, Australia, and South Africa.

Chatham's Proposals, 1775.—It is interesting to compare Galloway's scheme with that propounded by Chatham in February 1775: the latter provided for a congress in which the colonists should vote supplies for imperial uses other than the usual charge for the support of the civil government in the respective colonies. The legislative power of Great Britain was declared to be supreme, but the rights of the colonists were to be safeguarded by a declaration that "no tallage, tax or other duty for His Majesty's revenue shall be commanded or levied from British freemen in America, without common consent, by Act of provincial assembly there duly convened for the purpose." Had Chatham brought forward this scheme when Premier in 1766 it might have satisfied the majority of the Americans; in 1775, however, it could find scant support either in England or America.

The Beginning of the Struggle.—The story of the actual fighting belongs more to general history. Its blunders are

historic, and it was lucky for the Americans that Gage and Howe preceded Cornwallis, for Washington, even after the capture of Boston, could only with difficulty keep an army in the field. Scarcely had the extremists forced the Declaration of Independence through the Philadelphia Congress on July 4th, 1776, than the city had to be abandoned by the Americans. Recent researches have proved that George III. was strongly supported by most of his subjects in his determination to make the Americans accept his version of the old colonial system, but by a strange fatuity the king persisted in using German mercenaries against the colonists, and even if their bad behaviour has been exaggerated, the use of these foreign troops against his own subjects drove many of the moderates into the arms of the extremists.

Saratoga Springs, 1777.—The beginning of the end came when the surrender of Burgoyne to the revolted colonists at Saratoga Springs in 1777 encouraged the French and later the Spaniards openly to aid the rebellion with money and men. The plan of isolating rebel New England from the less disturbed colonies was so promising that it ought to have been tried earlier. Burgoyne was to seize Lake Champlain and march down the Hudson River—the western boundary of New England—to meet another army marching up that river from New York. Unfortunately the criminal negligence of Lord George Germaine was responsible for the delay in sending the necessary instructions to New York, and Burgoyne, left isolated, had to surrender. As the price of their help the French exacted that the Americans should not make peace until their independence was acknowledged, and it was probably French help rather than any enthusiasm kindled by the turgid eloquence of the Declaration of Independence that kept the Americans in the field.

Chatham and Burke advocate Conciliation.—Chatham and Burke had each in his different way striven for conciliatory measures and against the use of force. Chatham was now a dying man, and had been for many years but a pale shadow of his former greatness, but when in 1778 the Duke of Richmond proposed formally in Parliament to acknowledge the independence of the colonists he could not bear to see his life's work undone by the help of defeated France, and had himself conveyed to the House of Lords to utter his dying protest against the "dis-memberment of this most ancient and most noble monarchy." A few days later he died, but even he could not have saved the sovereignty of King George III. in America. However, he realised perhaps more clearly than the royal ministers the importance of French intervention.

Failure of Lord Cornwallis, 1781.—When, too late to change the course of the war, a really able English general was found in the person of Lord Cornwallis, he was sent to Carolina with an insufficient force. After marvellous successes he found that once more no help was coming from New York, and he had to retire to the Peninsula of York Town to await relief. Unfortunately for him the relieving English fleet was driven off by a strong French fleet, and blocked by a strong army under Washington himself he had to surrender in October 1781.

The Treaty of Versailles, 1783.—York Town was really the end of the war, although it was not till March 1782, after the capture of Minorca by the Spaniards, that George III. allowed Rockingham, the Whig leader, to succeed North as Premier, with permission to make peace. However, it was Shelburne, Rockingham's successor, who finally signed the treaties of Versailles with the Americans, Spaniards, and French in September 1783. The

Americans were eager to make peace, as they were beginning to suspect the disinterestedness of their French allies, and they obtained all British North America south of the St. Lawrence except Southern Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and the islands of Prince Edward and Newfoundland. Despite the promises of responsible American statesmen the United Empire loyalists were shamefully treated by the victors. Despoiled of their goods thousands of the loyalists betook themselves to Upper Canada—the modern Ontario—and the Maritime Provinces, and, helped by the British Government, in time built up new homes. However, they carried with them an intense dislike, not unmingled with contempt, for their oppressors, which kept the scattered Canadian Provinces faithful to England until they had grown into the full stature of a self-governing federation and England had learnt to welcome the claim to manhood of all her distant sons.

Pitt favours Trade with the United States.—The tragedy of the loss of the Thirteen Colonies in 1783 is rendered all the more pitiful by the fact that the Americans had no sooner won their independence than they were eager to knit together again the ties of commerce, and the treaty of commerce negotiated with Great Britain by Jay in 1794 led to a greater and more profitable volume of trade between the Americans and Britain than ever before. The old colonial system had been utterly condemned by Adam Smith in *The Wealth of Nations* (published in 1776), equally with Parliamentary Colbertism, and the younger Pitt, who became Premier in 1784, was a disciple of Adam Smith, and naturally felt enthusiasm for neither system. The loss of the most important colonies and the effect of the Industrial Revolution through which England was passing swept away the old system of State control

in all but name. Before Pitt could work out a new economic policy the outbreak of the French Revolution occurred and made the social problem more formidable than before.

Decay of the Old Colonial System.—Burke's Economical Reform Act of 1782 abolished the separate Secretary of State for the American Department founded in 1768, and, after being under the control of the Home Office till 1786, colonial affairs were transferred to a "Committee of the Privy Council for Trade and Plantations." However, the colonies¹ seemed so unimportant that in 1794 the newly established Secretary for War became nominally responsible for them; his responsibility became more real when in 1801 the Committee for Trade and Plantations ceased to act. The Navigation Acts were not formally repealed till 1849, but after the Peace of Versailles they became less and less important; not till emigration revived after the Napoleonic Wars was the attention of England really given to the colonies.

The Settlement of Canada.—During the American War of Independence the French settlers who composed the chief population of the colony of Quebec had given no trouble, but had even given aid. They had been conciliated by the Quebec Act of 1774, which, although it established the system of an irresponsible governor and a nominated council, had guaranteed to the French inhabitants their old civil law and the toleration of their Roman Catholic religion, in the teeth of the protests of the New England Puritans. When even the eloquence of

¹ It must be remembered that India was under the charge of the President of the Board of Control since Pitt's India Act of 1784, and that even the first convicts were not sent to New South Wales till 1787. Cape Colony was Dutch for many years longer.

Franklin failed to induce the French to revolt, the Americans attempted a fruitless invasion of Canada in 1775. It has already been mentioned that the United Empire Loyalists migrated to Canada and the Maritime Provinces after 1783, and their presence there caused fresh difficulties, for they naturally were not content to remain without representative institutions. In a laudable desire to satisfy their demands Pitt in 1791 passed the Constitutional Act which divided Canada into an Upper and a Lower Province—the modern Ontario and Quebec respectively—with representative institutions on the lines of those formerly existing in the Thirteen Colonies.

The Difficulties of Upper Canada.—Population was at first scanty in proportion to the area under settlement, and, despite the lavish generosity of the Imperial Government to the immigrants who had sacrificed their possessions to their loyalty, the want of capital seriously hindered the prosperity of the country, and the new settlers were not always adapted to agriculture. However, at first there were no constitutional difficulties: Canadian trade did not feel the burden of the Navigation Acts, and indeed it was long before any of the Canadian Provinces were able to meet the expenses of government. Moreover the leading men among the colonists were generally related by blood or marriage, and, as a rule, were Anglicans in religion. The real trouble began when in the early nineteenth century new settlers arrived in Upper Canada from the United States and England. The United Empire Loyalists resented the rough manners and democratic tendencies of the newcomers, and the latter in turn, being often non-Anglicans in religion, claimed for their own ministers a share in the lands known as the “Clergy Reserves.” The unsuccessful American raids during the war of 1812 had only con-

firmed the loyalists in their allegiance, and the open sympathy with republican ideas displayed by some of the American settlers caused the more moderate members of the Opposition—often Methodists in religion—to suspect their former allies even while they continued to chafe at the monopoly of power by the leaders of the Anglicans, who were styled in derision “the Family Compact.”

Feebleness of the British Colonial Office.—Unfortunately, although the British Government was not consciously oppressive, in practice the “mother country” was a clerk in a room at the Colonial Office, and even if he interested himself in the affairs of a colony, he was dependent for information on the officials there whose conduct was being attacked. Communication between the colonies and London was rare and uncertain, and the various royal commissions that investigated the alleged grievances of the Canadas were not very helpful in their reports. Probably the economic troubles of Upper Canada were more important even than the political questions. There was no money available for making the roads so necessary in a new country or for canalising the St. Lawrence, and there were constant disputes with the Assembly of Lower Canada, which was accused of withholding from the Upper Province a fair share of the customs, and of wilful neglect in improving the navigation of the lower St. Lawrence.

“French versus British” in Lower Canada.—Lower Canada had much more serious problems to solve. The British minority complained that it did not obtain fair treatment from the French-Canadian majority in the Assembly, and the latter, led by the lawyer Papineau, quarrelled with the Executive Council and demanded an elective legislative council and the power to punish all officials who opposed their wishes. Papineau looked upon

himself as a Canadian O'Connell, and he and the band of discontented and ambitious notaries and lawyers who supported him were for a time successful in ranging against the Government the normally hard-working and peaceful *habitant*, as the French-Canadian peasant was called. However, Papineau's wild talk of a republic alienated from him both the Church and many of his former British allies. He had formed vague plans of joint action with Mackenzie, the leader of the extremists in Upper Canada, but neither of the rebels met with any success when, shortly after the accession of Queen Victoria, they took up arms.

Lord Durham's Mission.—Papineau and Mackenzie soon fled to the United States, but few even of their opponents were content with the existing conditions in Canada, and Lord Melbourne's Government sent over as High Commissioner the Radical Earl of Durham: unfortunately the ministry laid down no clear limitations to his authority, but were only too glad to get rid of an inconvenient colleague. Durham realised that Canada's difficulties explained, even if they did not justify, the rebellion, and contented himself with banishing the captured "rebels" to Bermuda without a trial.

Most people in Canada were satisfied, despite the technical illegality of Durham's action, but before he could carry out his undoubted intention of federating all the American colonies under a system of self-government he was attacked in the Imperial Parliament for his treatment of the rebels, and indignant at the weak defence made by the ministry he resigned and returned home. His departure was the signal for a fresh outbreak of disorder, but Canada was ultimately the gainer, as it was clear that the old system was unworkable. Durham died in July 1840, but not before he had published his

classic "Report on . . . British North America," by which he laid the foundations of the new British Empire.

Lord Durham's Report.—It is probable that Durham as a Radical was less than just in his view of the Canadian Tories, but he was on firmer ground when he denounced the rule of the oligarchies in the various colonies: as he pointed out, such a system benefited neither the colonists nor the mother country. He justly praised the many good qualities of the French peasantry, but he insisted that they could not be allowed to remain "an old and stationary society in a new and progressive world." He read Lower Canada's problem as "two nations warring in the bosom of a single state." It is easy to criticise the report as to details, and it is true that the information provided by his secretaries was not always accurate, but his final recommendations possessed the simplicity of genius. Since he could not give the personal care required if a federation of all the North American colonies was to be successful, he advocated the legislative union of Upper and Lower Canada with an executive responsible to the Canadian Parliament. Under such a system the French need not be disfranchised, and he expected that future immigration would soon give the British settlers a clear majority in the population. In short, his prescription for the successful government of a colony was to let the colony govern itself as much as possible. Time has proved the wisdom of this policy, but no one could then foresee how greatly the gift of freedom would strengthen the bonds of Empire.

Declining Prosperity of the West Indies.—The Peace of Versailles left England most of the West Indian Islands, and they were valued far more highly than Canada. The islands almost from their settlement had had a flourishing trade with New England as well as with Great Britain,

and they found a great source of wealth in their dealing with Spanish America. Illicit trade with Mexico was winked at for the sake of the silver it brought, but in the early eighteenth century the Spanish Government's more liberal treatment of Mexico led to a decline in smuggling. When, after 1763, the British Government began to enforce the Navigation Acts more strictly the West Indies were threatened with disaster, and the islands were only partly saved by the establishment of "free ports" in Jamaica for certain commodities. The New Englanders by preference traded with the French West Indies, and it was an additional hardship to the planters that Great Britain monopolised their export of sugar. The Asiento clause of the Treaty of Utrecht had been useful to the planters and the slave trade was favoured by Great Britain down to its abolition in 1807, but in 1797 an imperial statute improved the condition of the slaves by forbidding their sale apart from the estate on which they lived.

However, the West Indies, like the other colonies, were only conceived as existing for the benefit of the mother country. In the seventeenth century they were convenient centres for attacking Spanish colonies and in the eighteenth for attacking those of the French, and when the Navigation Acts ceased to be an important factor in British policy the West Indian Islands began to decay.

CHAPTER VII.

THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AND THE AGE OF LAISSER-FAIRE.

1. THE NATURE AND MEANING OF THE REVOLUTION.

Application of Power to Industry.—The Industrial Revolution which began in the eighteenth century was distinguished from its predecessors because it marked the first application of mechanical power to industry. Before the middle of that century such machinery as was used was of a very primitive kind, and, except in the case of wind and water mills, its motive power was supplied by human beings, or occasionally by animals. The first practical application of mechanical power was an extension of the water-mill to driving a spinning-frame, but before the end of the century James Watt had made available the steam-engine, which in a wasteful and inefficient form had been used to work colliery pumps since 1705. The discovery of these various sources of mechanical energy rendered possible production on an ever increasing scale. Men who possessed the capital required to purchase the new machines and the factories in which they could be the more efficiently used were able to take advantage of the new inventions and amass wealth on a scale hitherto unknown. The workmen who could not adapt themselves to the new conditions suffered cruel hardships and at times actual injustice, which even those

who found employment did not wholly escape. The Industrial Revolution produced a social revolution the outcome of which we cannot yet foresee.

Early in the eighteenth century the maximum of production possible from native supplies of wool, wood, and iron was being reached in England, and the system of protection then in vogue became less defensible from the economic standpoint. However, the landowners complained when Spanish or Irish wool was imported, and men had not yet learned to use coal instead of wood for the smelting of iron. It is true that a certain amount of employment was found by the exotic trades, such as the linen, silk, and cotton manufactures introduced by Huguenots and earlier religious refugees, of which the raw materials could be imported and did not enter into competition with home-grown products. Flax could be grown in Ireland and Scotland, but the importation of silk and cotton re-acted favourably on the shipping industry, and the production of silk and cotton goods increased rapidly, especially that of the latter, after the introduction of machinery.

The Evolution of Capitalist Industry.—However, the more English industry required foreign raw materials for its manufactures and foreign markets for its finished products, the more also did it require capitalist merchants for its successful development. The old system of searchers and aulnagers, which had been so useful in securing a high standard of workmanship when the native industry was in its infancy, or, later, struggling to obtain a footing in European markets in the face of highly skilled and often longer established rivals, was not advantageous for production on a large scale and for a foreign market, where cheapness combined with suitability for different needs was more important. The merchant who could

obtain command of capital and at the same time supply foreign customers with what they wanted could without difficulty make large profits.

The older industries of England, especially that of cloth-weaving, depended chiefly, at any rate down to the end of the eighteenth century, on a supply of raw materials produced in this country; before the spread of sheep-farming in Australia and other new countries the introduction of machinery could have little effect in increasing the production of woollen textiles, and here the power loom was slower in coming into use than in the case of cotton textiles. Even in the latter industry, as the supply of raw materials was at first small, the practice of manufacturing for export did not greatly increase production, but it did alter the character of the industrial system, which passed from the domestic to the capitalist type.

Dr. Cunningham has pointed out that the guilds were not incompatible with the domestic system, and in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries a man could at one time be a "domestic" worker, and then at another time an employee of a capitalist who might even own the looms at which he worked. His case was similar to that of the small yeoman farmer who was sometimes compelled to eke out his income by acting as a farm labourer. Early cases of capitalist employers, such as John Kempe the Fleming and Jack of Newbury,¹ probably never were entirely unrepresented in English industry, but in the seventeenth century, at any rate, the domestic system prevailed. However, even here the merchant who bought the products of the domestic worker and sold them in the cloth markets of London and elsewhere tended to pass

¹ See *ante*, p. 122.

into the capitalist "clothier," who began by finding the yarn needed by the domestic worker, and ended by giving him orders to weave particular kinds of cloth for the foreign markets in which they were most suitable.

Decay of the Domestic System.—However, despite the undoubted advantages possessed by capitalists even in the early eighteenth century, especially in directing manufacture to meet the special needs of the different markets, the domestic workers might have held their own for some time longer, for they were accustomed to eke out their industrial earnings in many cases by tilling a patch of ground in their leisure moments. But three blows fell upon them in rapid succession: the Agricultural Revolution introduced a new system of farming, and the rapid growth of enclosures deprived many of them of their patches of land and free pasture; the Mechanical Revolution during the latter part of the eighteenth century ruined first the spinners and then the weavers under the domestic system, who were able neither to compete with the cheaper machine-made products nor to buy the new machinery; finally, the French Revolution led to a long period of war, during which the domestic workers suffered from the resulting industrial crises, and, in common with the lower classes generally, were demoralised by the cruel charity of a badly administered poor law.

Influence of the Classical Economists.—The ruling classes saw that the old system of State regulation of industry had fallen into ruins, but, having neither the time nor the requisite knowledge to create a successor to it suitable to the new industrial system, they took refuge in the *laissez-faire* teaching of the classical economists who professed to be followers of Adam Smith. Forgetting that *The Wealth of Nations* could not possibly have foreseen an industrial problem of which there were

few indications in 1776, the economists declared against all State interference in industrial matters and conditions of labour, in the assumed interests of the utmost possible degree of productivity. However, when peace returned in 1815 philanthropists began to realise that industrial prosperity might be bought at too dear a rate if it necessitated the virtual enslavement of the working classes, and even before Peel and Gladstone had completed the demolition of the old system by their "Free Trade" Budgets, the passing of the Factory Acts had heralded the appearance of a new and perhaps wiser system of social and industrial regulation.

2. THE AGRICULTURAL REVOLUTION.

Growth of Population.—The accession of William III. to the English throne saw the beginning of a long era of internal prosperity; although England was frequently at war, no campaigns more serious than the Jacobite rebellions were fought in this island, and, with the exception of the War of American Independence, none of the wars had an unfavourable issue. However, while England was capturing foreign markets and "making trade flourish by war," her rivals, such as France, Holland, and the various German states, saw their countries ravaged by hostile armies, and their internal prosperity as well as their external trade was ruined. According to a moderate estimate England's population increased from five and a half millions to six and a half millions between 1688 and 1750, and it was enumerated as nine millions by the first official census in 1801. The positive checks on population in earlier days, such as war, pestilence, and famine, henceforth ceased to operate so freely in England, and the problem of the supply of food and clothes, and, indirectly,

of employment, became pressing in the eighteenth and succeeding centuries.

Economic Condition of England c. 1688.—England had hitherto been largely a self-supporting country with regard to food, and the corn-bounty legislation of William III.'s reign helped to ensure a sufficient supply of home-grown cereals down to the time of the French Revolution. However, it is clear that but for the Agricultural Revolution during the first half of the eighteenth century England from her own resources would not have found it possible to support the increased population. In 1688 half the superficial area of England was moor and waste; roads were bad and railways and canals unknown. Three-fifths of the land actually under the plough were cultivated by the wasteful three-field system. Under the custom of this legacy of an earlier time one-third of the arable land lay fallow each year, and an appreciable portion of the remainder was taken up by the "balks," or uncultivated ridges marking off the separate strips, and by field paths. The land actually tilled bore only scanty crops, as the system of farming was unscientific and manuring was done carelessly if at all. As it was not possible to import supplies from the Continent, on account of the ravages of almost perpetual war, only a revolution in agricultural methods could produce the necessary increase of food-stuffs. This increased supply of food alone made possible in some ways the Industrial Revolution under which England had to support a greatly increased population.

Pioneers of the New Agriculture.—The Agricultural Revolution is associated with the names of several famous pioneers in scientific farming. Jethro Tull of Berkshire (1674-1741) had been much impressed with the results obtained by a careful cultivation of the vine in the south

of France, and tried to adapt the methods used to English cereals. He desired to prevent waste and to make the most of the seed sown. In 1701 he invented a "drill" to sow grain, and his machine for sowing clover only required one-fifth of the old allowance of seed per acre. He was a great enemy of weeds, and he realised the importance of suitably prepared soil, although curiously enough he did not favour the use of manure. His contemporary, Lord Townshend (1674-1738), had taken to agriculture on his estate in East Anglia after his quarrel with his brother-in-law, Sir Robert Walpole. Townshend was a firm believer in the use of marl on light soils. In other matters he was not merely a disciple of Tull, but he won fame and a nickname—"Turnip Townshend"—by his attempts to introduce a scientific rotation of crops; he discovered that the land hitherto allowed to lie fallow at intervals was really improved by bearing a crop of turnips. Turnips could be used as a winter food for cattle, and so obviated the old practice of killing off large portions of the stock in the late autumn and salting them down as "marts"¹ for winter food. Not only did the national stock of cattle increase in numbers and improve in quality, but the important social result was obtained that, freed from the danger which always lurks in salted food, the health of the nation improved. Townshend was also interested in the enclosure of wastes for tillage and in the building of roads.

' "Coke of Holkham" in Norfolk (1752-1842) was another East Anglian pioneer. He had travelled widely both in England and on the Continent, and so well did he take to heart and apply the lessons he thus learnt that by careful farming he turned a badly managed estate into

¹ From "Martinmas," i.e. St. Martin's Day, November 11th.

one of the most profitable in the country. Like Townshend he favoured a scientific rotation of crops, and by careful selection and good feeding he greatly improved his breed of sheep and cattle. His horses were also famous, and before long two of them could drag a plough which had formerly required five. Coke was one of the pioneers of re-afforestation, and in his later days had the almost unique experience of sailing in a ship built of oak-trees which he himself had planted. His estate was one of the show-places of the country, and was famous not only for its largely increased rent-roll, but also for the exceptionally good relations between the owner and his tenantry; the latter were able to obtain long leases at a reasonable rent, and were under few restrictions provided that they farmed the land intelligently. There was neither poor-house nor ale-house on the estate; indeed the former had been removed as not being required. In short, the Holkham experiment was a striking example of the value to the country of the new scientific agriculturist who had command of capital with which to carry out his ideas.

Two other pioneers should be noticed, Bakewell of Leicestershire (1725-1795) and Arthur Young (1741-1820). In 1755 Bakewell began his historic experiments in crossing the various breeds of cattle so as to emphasise and increase the advantages of the various kinds in their descendants. He found many imitators, with great advantage to the nation, for the quality of the hides and fleeces and the amount of meat produced were both increased at the time when such an increase was most needed. Between 1710 and 1795 the weight of a fat ox at Smithfield Market increased from 370 lb. to 800 lb. and the weight of a sheep from 28 lb. to 80 lb. George III. won the nickname of "Farmer George" from his support of the new farming, and his example had its influence in making it popular.

Arthur Young and Enclosures.—Arthur Young was the secretary of the semi-official Board of Agriculture that existed between 1793 and 1822. He had travelled widely both in England and abroad, and his various "Tours" are most valuable for the light they throw on contemporary social conditions. Young was a champion of the "enclosure" movement. He pointed out the wastefulness of the prevailing three-field system; if the fallow fields, the pasture or waste, and the "balks" of unploughed turf that separated the various strips were added to the land already under the plough and re-divided as a few large fields among the various owners, not only would there be more land available for the plough, but there would also be more encouragement for the farmer to spend time and money on the careful cultivation of his land. Under the old system the farmer was too often hampered by traditional restrictions, even when he did not see his labour wasted by the weeds that crept in from the land of his careless neighbour.

Agreed Enclosures.—The rate at which the new methods of agriculture were introduced depended largely on the ownership of the land and the command of capital. Occasionally when one man owned or bought all the land of a village the change was made with comparatively little trouble. However, in the eighteenth century a large portion of the arable land of England was held on various obsolete or obsolescent terms by "yeomen" or working farmers who tilled the land by the help of their own families, and occasionally of a few labourers. These yeomen also possessed rights of pasture for their cattle over the waste as well as over the arable land of the village after the harvest, and moreover the cottagers or farm-labourers, although possessing little or no land in the common fields, had traditional, if not always strictly legal, rights over the pasture or waste and managed to keep there an ox or a

cow, a few sheep or pigs or poultry, and to gather wood for their fire or hedges, and the wild fruits and nuts in their season.

Enclosures by Act of Parliament.—When the ownership of the land in a village was shared by a few men these often agreed to the appointment of commissioners to re-divide the land, but complications arose when the owners were more numerous and, as not seldom happened, the yeomen were copyholders. The re-division might be opposed by a minority consisting of the poorer or less enterprising tenants; in that case the only alternative to allowing the old wasteful system to continue was for the other party to apply to Parliament for a private Act appointing commissioners with power to “enclose” the land. If the applicants held the larger portion of the soil the Act was usually passed, and in a few years the cost of the enclosure and fencing of the new fields was recovered in the form of increased profits.

Injustice to the Poorer Classes.—It is perhaps not strictly correct to say that the commons were stolen from the people by the Enclosure Acts, for the legal right to use the common generally depended on the occupation of one of the “farms” or “cottages” that represented the former holdings of the village, while the freehold was vested in the lord of the manor. However, it is indisputable that many of the so-called “agreed enclosures” took place because a few rich men bought up the holdings of objectors or bullied them into acquiescence. Moreover, the traditional, and in some cases even the legal, rights of the poorer class were compensated by unfair allotments if they were not disregarded altogether. It was not unknown for a small yeoman to be compelled to sell his newly allotted acres in order to find money for his proportion of the expenses of the enclosure, and to sink to the position of a mere landless

labourer in his native village. The labourers sometimes received merely a small monetary compensation or a useless fragment of land in place of their old—and to them valuable—common rights, and they too often found that as the various mechanical inventions were introduced into the textile trades, their domestic industries of spinning and weaving became a less sure means of support. The only alternatives before them were to accept work in the new factories or to sink into the dispirited mass of parish paupers.

The General Enclosure Act of 1801.—The process of enclosure at first progressed steadily and only some 112 private Acts had been passed by 1750. Then under the influence of the new ideas the pace quickened and nearly 3,000 Acts had been passed by 1801; in that year, under the influence of Young's "Board of Agriculture," a General Enclosure Act was passed by which the process of enclosure became both speedier and less costly. Long before the end of the nineteenth century the remaining common fields had been enclosed, together with a large proportion of the moors and wastes of the country. The nation gained as a whole by the increased production of food, but, although some men made fortunes, England has in recent years sorely missed that "bold peasantry, their country's pride," whom a short-sighted Government allowed to be dispossessed of its old lands. Most Continental nations secured their peasantry in a reasonable proportion of the village lands when the old manorial system was abolished, and even in England in more recent years various Acts to facilitate the creation of allotments and small holdings have been passed, in the hope of reviving the peasant farmer under better economic conditions. Arthur Young, to do him justice, was not blind to the less admirable side of enclosing, and recommended that in every case

where enclosure on a large scale took place land sufficient to support a cow should be vested in the parish for the use of each cottager; another useful suggestion was made by Lord Winchilsea, who urged that each cottage should possess a garden. Unfortunately the new landlords too often sought merely to reap the benefit of the high prices for agricultural produce made possible by the long French wars, and the State allowed them to "do as they liked with their own."

Evil Effects of the Great War.—Indeed the main evils of the English land system, as of the English factory system, in the early nineteenth century were the result of the abnormal conditions due to the long period of war. In England alone could industry be carried on, and, thanks to the various mechanical inventions and the use of steam as well as water power, England's powers of production increased so enormously that she could supply the world and with her gains finance the war in the interest of herself and her allies. However, the new industrial system meant an enormously disproportionate increase of the town population, and it was possible for the agriculturists to provide this new industrial class with food only by the most complete use of the new methods of farming. The land must be enclosed and capital employed on the largest scale; then agriculture became a profitable employment, but the capitalist farmer, like the capitalist manufacturer, sought the highest return possible and bought his labour in the cheapest market.

The Corn Laws.—Except in years of scarcity England had been accustomed to export cereals, but as the eighteenth century neared its close she consumed an ever greater proportion of her own produce. For the first time since the Corn Bounty Act of 1689 the exportation of corn was partially prohibited in 1773; similar Acts, each increasing

in stringency were passed in 1791 and 1804. In the latter year no corn might be exported if the home price was over 56s. per quarter, and no bounty on exports might be paid when the price was 48s. a quarter. The importation of foreign corn was heavily taxed down to 1773; after that date the various Corn Laws down to 1801 imposed a nominal duty of 6d. per quarter when the home price was 48s., but, with a view to securing ample home-grown food in war time, the duty increased on a sliding scale as the home price fell, until in 1804 the farmers were not faced with foreign competition until the price of home-grown wheat had reached 60s. per quarter.

The various Corn Laws were passed largely because it was necessary to provide food for the nation and little could at that time be imported from abroad, especially after the Great War had begun. In effect they guaranteed a minimum price to the farmer, but it is undoubted that much of the increased supply of food was due to the work of the Board of Agriculture, which sent round lecturers to teach the new methods of farming and offered prizes for useful inventions, as well as advocating the making of better roads and enclosures. The high price of wheat tempted men to enclose waste lands even with borrowed money; the payment of the interest, however, became a difficulty when the price of wheat fell at the end of the war and the period of agricultural depression began.

Introduction of Agricultural Machinery.—Probably one of the most important factors of the increased food supply was the introduction of agricultural machinery for the purpose of saving human labour. In 1781 a drill-plough was patented, and this was followed in quick succession by machines for sowing, reaping, harrowing and winnowing, and a mechanical haymaker was introduced some years later. Various types of threshing machines were invented; some

of the later types were worked by water power, as that of Meikle in 1798, and were fairly efficient, but steam was applied to such machines only in 1803 and for many years was rarely used. Farmers able to obtain command of capital were alone able to buy this expensive machinery, but by its aid those in Scotland and the North of England managed to weather the evil days after the peace, when the less progressive and often more luxurious farmers of the south felt severely the force of foreign competition.

The Corn Law of 1815.—The Corn Law of 1815, which prohibited the importation of foreign-grown wheat until the home price reached 80s. a quarter, was passed not merely in the hope of preserving the prevailing high rents for the benefit of the landlords, but also with the intention of safeguarding the national food supply in case of a renewal of the war. However, the price of wheat fell sufficiently to cause the farmers to seek a reduction of rent, although food remained too dear for the lower classes owing to the industrial disorganisation and distress that followed on the peace.

The Beginnings of Scientific Agriculture.—The only farmers who could make agriculture pay were those who called in science to their aid. Chemistry and botany began to be studied from the agriculturist point of view, and in 1840, on the eve of the repeal of the Corn Laws, Justus von Liebig made his famous report to the British Association on "the Relation of Organic Chemistry to Agriculture and Physiology." His investigations into plant life were continued through many years by John Bennett Lawes and his chemist Gilbert at the Rothamstead Agricultural Experiment Station, itself the forerunner of many others. Now it is a commonplace that the poorest soil can be made fertile by the application of suitable manures—nitrates, phosphates, potash, etc.—and the agricultural chemist has taught

us that horses and cattle may be improved in various ways by scientific feeding.

The problem of the food supply became for a time less pressing when in the last quarter of the nineteenth century the vast wheat fields of the Americas, Australia, and Russia were made available by the introduction of the Bessemer steel rail and the iron and steel steamship. However, the demand for corn again shows a tendency to overtake the available supply, but recent successful experiments in scientific agriculture suggest that the Agricultural Revolution is only yet in its infancy.

3. THE ERA OF MECHANICAL INVENTION.

The Early Textile Industries.—The application of machinery to the arts of spinning and weaving revolutionised English industrial life. The textile industries had long been established in England, but neither the weaving of woollen cloth nor the more recent cotton and linen industries had undergone any striking development down to the middle of the eighteenth century. The wool used was largely of home production, but the cotton wholly and the linen largely came from other countries. The cotton cloth in earlier days was woven with a linen or woollen warp, for the cotton yarn spun by hand was too weak for the purpose. As has been already explained, the textile industries were largely carried on under the domestic system by the peasantry, but their hand labour was slow and the product not always of the best quality. The "spinner," often the unmarried woman of the family (hence the word *spinster*), found it difficult to supply enough yarn for the weaver's needs, and the problem was aggravated by John Kay's invention of the "flying shuttle," a contrivance which

enabled one weaver to do the work of the two who were formerly required to weave the wider cloths.

The Introduction of Machinery.—The earlier mechanical inventions were more popular in the cotton trade, which, being established around the unincorporated market-town of Manchester, was not so bound down by conservative traditions. The climate of Lancashire by its very humidity was the natural home of the cotton industry, and, despite its exotic character, the latter steadily drove out the earlier State-favoured woollen industry. However, Kay's invention, which dated from 1738, was not widely used till it had been improved by his son Robert in 1760. A few years later James Hargreaves of Blackburn invented his famous "spinning-jenny," by which a number of spindles could be worked at the same time by means of a belt and a treadle. Now the spinners could produce more yarn than the weavers could use, and at first they suffered from periodic spells of unemployment, until the cheapness of their product created the demand that could absorb the supply. In the meantime Hargreaves was so unpopular that he had to leave the district, and his machines were often destroyed by mobs.

However, his fate did not discourage others, and in 1769 Richard Arkwright, a Bolton barber, improved on an earlier suggestion and invented an improved spinning machine—the water-frame—worked by water power at first and later by steam. He too had to face unpopularity and the burning of his mill, but he persevered and by cleverly utilising and improving the ideas of others he made a fortune. One of his contemporaries was Samuel Crompton, who combined the inventions of Hargreaves and Arkwright in a machine called the "mule," which enabled him to spin a much finer and stronger thread than before; the thread produced by Crompton and Arkwright was now strong enough to be used for the warp, and pure cotton cloth became a possibility.

Fortunately for Lancashire, new supplies of raw cotton became available as required. Formerly cotton was imported from India and the East and to some extent from the West Indies. However, during the American War of Independence the Southern States had begun the cultivation of cotton on a large scale, and the output increased with the demand, thanks to the use of slave labour and abundance of land. In 1792 Eli Whitney invented a cotton gin which rendered it much easier to remove the seeds from the "wool." Down to the end of the nineteenth century it seemed that despite the abolition of slavery the United States would be able to supply Lancashire's needs, but rival spinners sprang up in European countries, especially in Germany, and finally in India and Japan and the United States. The world's cotton crop was also decreased by the ravages of the "boll-weevil" and other pests, while improved machinery increased the demand for raw material. In consequence a British Empire Cotton-growing Association has been formed under State patronage to increase the production of cotton, especially in the British African territories.

The Power Loom.—It is curious that the application of power to weaving was neither so early nor so successful. Dr. Edmund Cartwright invented the power loom in 1787, but even when two years later it could be driven by steam it made headway only by slow degrees. One reason was that steam engines were as yet few in number, but perhaps the more important reason was the fact that the labour supply made available by the improvements in tillage had already been attracted into the hand-loom weaving industry since improvements in spinning had made yarn more plentiful. The competition for work during the war kept wages at so low a rate that it was not profitable to introduce the expensive power loom. The

latter certainly had advantages over the hand loom as to speed, ease of work, and uniformity of quality, but it had the disadvantage of not being suitable at first for weaving the finer kinds of cloth. It has been estimated that in 1813 there were only 2,400 power looms in use: by 1820 the number had increased to 14,000, but they probably employed not more than 7,000 girls as compared with the 240,000 workers at hand looms. However, during the nineteenth century the power loom was steadily improved, till at last the hand loom disappeared, except for a few special kinds of work.

Introduction of Steam into Industry.—The possibility of obtaining power to drive the new machinery had a great deal to do with its success in ousting hand labour. At first even Arkwright was content with an adaptation of the old horse mill formerly used for grinding corn: improved methods of utilising water power were useful only in the neighbourhood of suitable streams. Neither horse power nor water power could supply sufficient energy for more than small localised industries, but the invention of an efficient steam engine solved the problem. From the days of Hero of Alexandria (circ. 130 B.C.) steam had been known as a motive power, but even the members of Charles II.'s Royal Society¹ could not solve the problem of its practical use. The first approach to a commercial

¹ This scientific society, although incorporated by Charles II. in 1661, was probably the lineal successor of the informal meetings of "philosophers" which began in London about 1645 and of the "Invisible College" referred to by the scientist Boyle a little later. Other "philosophers" met at Oxford about 1648 and corresponded with those of London, finally coalescing with the latter at Gresham College in 1660. Their interest in the "New Philosophy or Experimental Philosophy" makes them a link between Francis Bacon, the inventor of the new science, and the present day.

use was when Thomas Newcomen, the Dartmouth blacksmith, in 1705 designed a steam pumping-engine for use in ridding the local mines of water. Newcomen himself and others after him gradually improved upon the first model, but the steam pump consumed so much coal that by 1760 it was falling out of use where coal was dear, as in Cornwall.

Watt's Improved Steam Engine.—The situation was saved by James Watt, the Glasgow optician and maker of musical instruments. Watt had a genuine interest in applied science, and a careful study of one of Newcomen's engines taught him the secret of its failure. He saw that as the source of the energy was the heat generated by the coal, it was necessary to keep the steam produced at as high a temperature as possible if the consumption of coal was to be decreased, whereas the walls of Newcomen's cylinder allowed the steam to cool too quickly. After much consideration Watt hit upon the device of a separate condenser and an air-pump to exhaust the cylinder after each stroke, but he was so poor that to carry out the necessary experiments he had to assign a large share in the prospective profits of his invention to the founder of the Scottish iron industry, Dr. Roebuck. However, it was not till he became a partner of Matthew Boulton, an enterprising Birmingham manufacturer, in 1773 that skilled workmen translated his discovery into a practical success, while Boulton popularised it by his tact and patience in a way that would have been quite impossible for Watt, who was by this time broken in health and spirits by continuous misfortune.

Watt's discovery was put on the market at an opportune moment and England gained a long lead in the industrial race. The theory of the steam engine has been studied by trained scientists since Watt's time and the amount of

energy developed has enormously increased. The steam-driven electric dynamo and the more recent steam turbine were made possible only by Watt's discovery.

The Early Iron Industry.—If the steam engine depended on coal for its energy, it depended almost as much on the improvements in iron-working for the increase in efficiency which made it an economical motive power for the new machinery. Down to the eighteenth century coal was smelted with charcoal, and the industry was seated in England in wooded districts such as the Weald of Kent and Sussex and the Forest of Dean. However, wood had become scarce as early as the Tudors, and by 1740 the output of the fifty-nine English furnaces, though only 18,000 tons, was probably at its maximum: a far greater quantity was produced in Scandinavia or Russia. The growing scarcity of timber forced men to make experiments in smelting iron with coal, which had for centuries been used more and more as household fuel.

The Discoveries of Darby and Huntsman.—About 1713 Abraham Darby, of Coalbrookdale in Shropshire, began to calcine iron ore with coal, and in 1730 his son, of the same name, first turned the coal into coke and used it to smelt iron with the help of a bellows worked by water. Darby's pig-iron could be used for producing cast iron or wrought iron, and one of his contemporaries, John Huntsman, began to make cast steel by smelting the purer Swedish iron in a crucible with charcoal. Huntsman's works were at Sheffield and gradually his rivals discovered his secret, and the new Sheffield steel became in great demand both for cutlery and tools. When by Huntsman's invention steel was produced which rendered soft metals generally, and iron in particular, more workable a greater demand for iron was created.

Cort's Puddling Furnace—Unfortunately British iron

was inferior to foreign iron, and in 1770 the Russian Government, convinced of their monopoly, greatly increased their price for iron. The unexpected result was that Henry Cort devoted himself to the improvement of British iron with such success that by 1783 he had invented a new method, or perhaps rather improved upon an earlier one, by which wrought iron could be produced from pig-iron by the use of coal. The melting pig-iron was "puddled" or stirred with an iron bar and afterwards freed from its impurities by being passed through rollers and beaten. Cort met with misfortunes and died poor, but his skill had increased enormously the output of really satisfactory iron and had indirectly affected the coal-mining industry by creating a new demand for coal.

Later Discoveries.—Cort, like Watt, paved the way for later improvements. Neilson, of Glasgow, in 1828 invented the hot-blast, which was so useful for the special ore of that district and went far to create the Scottish Black Country. By the new system the quantity of coke required to smelt a ton of iron was halved, and although the invention was not so profitable in England, the total output of iron was enormously increased. In 1851 the Cleveland iron industry was started and profited by its proximity to the splendid coking coal of Durham. Indeed, to an unusual extent coal and iron were found side by side in England, and during the period when the principal lines of railway were being built in the "Forties" and "Fifties" the importance of a good supply of iron cannot be over-estimated. In 1856 Sir Henry Bessemer described to the British Association his method of converting molten pig-iron directly into steel. One of the results of this invention was the steel rail, which by its lasting qualities materially cheapened the cost of transit and so ultimately of food, and also facilitated the settlement of new countries

such as Western America. Steel boilers and steel ships became more common as the price of steel fell, and as late as the "Seventies" of last century Britain seemed destined to remain the "workshop of the world."

4. TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS.

Decay of the Old Roads.—At the beginning of the eighteenth century the condition of roads in England was very bad. The old Roman roads had fallen into decay in the middle ages, and such roads as were made were poorly constructed, and neither as to surface nor as to width were they suitable for speedy traffic by wheeled vehicles. The clumsy wagons and strings of pack-horses then used were both slow and expensive. Not every inland town possessed a navigable river, and some of the towns, such as Newcastle, found themselves in difficulties as their river silted up. Prices varied enormously from place to place, largely because of the cost of transport. However, in 1761 the self-taught engineer James Brindley showed men how to overcome the disadvantages of their topography when he constructed the famous Bridgwater Canal, which enabled the Duke of Bridgwater to transport his coals over the seven miles of hilly country that cut off his mine at Worsley from its natural market at Manchester.

The New Canals.—Water carriage was so cheap as compared with transit by road that a splendid series of canals sprang up in England. The Pennines were pierced by the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, and the Thames was joined to the Severn waterway system by another canal. The new textiles and the heavier goods such as coal, iron ore, and clay could now easily be transported to the more profitable markets. A good example of the value of water transport is given by the marvellous growth of the Staffordshire

potteries. Josiah Wedgwood, of Etruria, near Burslem, brought flints from East Anglia and china-clay from Devon. Thanks to a supply of better raw materials he was able to introduce improved methods of manufacture, while at the same time the new waterways afforded him a cheaper and safer means of transport for his heavy and brittle goods.

The Old Road System.—Side by side with the development of waterways went the building of new and improved roads. The description of English roads, even those near London, given by Arthur Young would be incredible if from the pen of a less trustworthy writer. Each parish in earlier times was responsible for the repair of all the roads, including the main roads, that passed through it, and generally from ignorance, carelessness or poverty, or from all these, discharged the duty very imperfectly. Even when in the eighteenth century Turnpike Commissioners were appointed by Act of Parliament to make or repair important roads and allowed to charge tolls to such as used the roads to defray expenses, improvement was slow, since the art of road-making was lost.

Work of Metcalf.—One of the early road-makers was "blind Jack Metcalf" of Knaresborough, and it was by his skill that communication across the rugged Pennines between Lancashire and Yorkshire was made possible. He began his work about 1765 and built roads and bridges with such speed and energy that he materially aided the parallel development of the cotton industry of Lancashire and the woollen industry of Yorkshire. Hitherto men could cross the Pennines only by rough roads over passes such as the Aire Gap and the Calder Gap, but Metcalf made a splendid and much needed road from Huddersfield to Manchester: he showed that it was possible to blast a road through sandstone and also to lay road foundations

in a mountain-bog. Unlike the Roman engineers, Metcalf willingly sacrificed short cuts if he could find or cut an easy gradient, but unfortunately the surface of his roads was poor.

Telford and Macadam.—The modern hard-surface road was the work of two other men, both Scotsmen, named Telford (1757-1834) and Macadam (or McAdam) (1756-1836). Telford worked both in England and Scotland and constructed both roads and canals. He lived long enough to link up the canals of the North-east Midlands in a gallant but hopeless attempt to fight the threatening railway competition. In his day the turnpike roads were being abolished, and Telford repaired and rebuilt many main roads including the Glasgow-Carlisle road, the difficult Holyhead road for the Irish traffic, and above all the Great North Road. His object was to make roads suitable for the new and speedy stage coaches—the immediate forerunners of the railways—as well as to open up the remoter parts of the country. The Jacobite rebellions had first drawn the attention of the Government to the “roadlessness” of Scotland and the North generally, and Telford’s work not only linked the two countries together for their mutual benefit, but also rendered possible the enormous economic and industrial development of Scotland during the early nineteenth century. Telford created or improved the East Coast harbours of Scotland, and also introduced the important innovation of the use of the stronger and more lasting iron for bridge-building just as iron was becoming cheaper and so more plentiful.

Macadam’s work lay chiefly in England, and though he followed Telford’s principles he differed from him in method. Telford and Macadam both insisted that the subsoil of the road should be drained and that the materials for the surface should be most carefully chosen:

Metcalf had used local materials, but his successors would use only the most suitable stones, even if they had to be brought from a distance. Moreover, Telford was most particular that the surface of his roads should neither be flat enough to harbour water nor "cambered" to such a degree that traffic was difficult. As Telford copied the Roman custom of giving the best foundation possible to his roads they were very expensive, and it must be admitted that he thought too little of the surface in view of the heavy traffic on the main roads. Macadam, on the contrary, repaired roads better than he made them. He was apt to be careless of his foundations, since he believed he had discovered a process—called after him "macadamising"—by which roads could be laid across bogs and sand with very little foundation if good drainage could be secured. His idea was that cubical pieces of stone of equal size laid on a not too rigid foundation would be wedged together to form a perfect surface by the mere weight of traffic over them, and that artificial binding was a disadvantage. Experience has proved that Telford's foundations are necessary on main roads, but that "macadamising" is to a large extent feasible on the less important ones. However, Macadam's experiments led men to study the problem of surface constitution. Wood paving and asphalt, introduced in towns in 1839 and 1869 respectively, give the silent, dustless, durable roads required, but they are expensive and not suitable for horses. The appearance of motor traction has produced the dust problem on macadamised country roads. Tar-spraying and bituminous binding have been tried, but the problem is to produce a good surface material that does not easily powder.

The Locomotive.—However, roads and canals alike were less advantageous, especially for heavy loads and long

distances, than the locomotive running on rails. Horse traction was dear, especially for speedy travelling, whether by road or canal barge. However, the idea of a special road designed for speedy transit was not new. There had been wooden wagon-ways on Tyneside since the later sixteenth century for the purpose of carrying coal from the pit to the river-side, and towards the end of the eighteenth century iron rails took the place of wooden planks in colliery districts, and heavy loads could easily be drawn along them by horses. In 1804 Trevithick invented a locomotive to replace horse-traction at Merthyr in South Wales, but, like Newcomen's pumping engine, it was too expensive for general use. The first really successful engine was that of George Stephenson (1781-1848). He was a mine-worker from boyhood, and besides inventing a miner's safety lamp that rivalled Sir Humphrey Davey's in 1815, he was especially interested in colliery engineering. Many people thought that a stationary winding-engine was likely to be more efficient than a locomotive in view of steep gradients, but Stephenson carefully studied the problem, and decided that if the railroads were specially made the difficulty could be overcome, and that the initial expense would soon be recovered.

Work of George Stephenson.—Stephenson had built his first engine, the "Blücher," in 1814, but his real chance came when he obtained the post of engineer to the new Stockton and Darlington railway, which was built in 1825. This railway caused the price of coal to fall from 18s. to 10s. a ton at Darlington, and another result was the proposal for a railway between Liverpool and Manchester. Thanks to Stephenson's arguments against the proposal to use fixed engines, the directors of the new railway offered a prize for the most efficient locomotive. Stephenson's "Rocket" was the only locomotive that survived

the practical test in 1829. He showed his skill as a surveyor later by laying his lines successfully over marshes such as Chat Moss, and supervising the construction of some of the more important of the new lines. It seems curious to us now that the railways themselves were looked upon as public roads which any person might use by paying a toll. They were not primarily designed for passengers, but for goods traffic; but the speed and cheapness of railway travelling soon caused even the greatly improved stage coaches to disappear wherever the two came into competition.

Railway Legislation.—The success of Stephenson's "Rocket" led to a great extension of railways, until feverish speculation culminated in the railway mania of 1840 to 1850, which was largely responsible for the financial crisis of 1847. After that date the construction of railways was carried out in a slower and wiser manner. Rival and competing lines were amalgamated until some half-dozen large companies controlled most of the railways, and new lines were laid down only where likely to be profitable. An Act of 1842 introduced State regulation of the railways, and in 1889 another Act gave the Board of Trade fuller control. At the present time the construction and working of the railways, including their fares and freight rates, are dependent on Parliamentary sanction, and on the outbreak of the war in 1914 the railways were virtually taken over by the State. The results of this experiment will be especially interesting in view of an oft-repeated demand that the railways should be nationalised.

Light Railways.—It is impossible to over-estimate the part played by railways in the national life. Only the innate conservatism of the authorities prevented the early development of a steam-driven motor car for use on the

ordinary roads; opposition has been overcome in recent years, and in 1896 a Light Railway Act was passed which favoured the construction of short railway lines and district tramways in remote as well as in populous parts of the country. The town tramway, driven often now by electricity, has become indispensable as the towns have increased in size and is frequently the property of the local governing body, and the county tramways and light railways have made it possible for county people to purchase supplies in the towns more cheaply and to find a market for their own produce at remunerative rates.

The nation as a whole has gained by the extension of its railway system. Wholly new towns, such as Crewe and Swindon, have been the direct creation of the railway, while other towns and villages, formerly condemned to isolation by their geography, have become important commercial centres. Towns such as Carlisle, Birmingham, and Stirling owe much to railways, while seaports such as Hull, Harwich, and Dover enjoy the double advantages of railways and steamships. Older towns which were unsuitable for, or hostile to, the railway have suffered in a corresponding degree. The increased ease of travel and transport has tended to reduce prices and cheapen processes by the competition it made possible. The feeling of national solidarity has grown, since the North is no longer cut off from the South by distance and difficulty of travel. New ideas are more easily spread abroad; the railway, the press, and the telegraph and telephone may be compared only to the invention of printing for their social effects.

Early Steamships.—During the nineteenth century the steamship was developed along with the steam-engine. Actually the first steamboat, the "Comet," sailed on the Clyde in 1812, before the first practicable locomotive had

been invented. Three years later steamships were running between Glasgow and Liverpool and Edinburgh and London. Robert Fulton launched the "Clermont" on the Hudson River in America in 1807, in 1819 an American vessel crossed the Atlantic partly under steam, and in 1825 an English vessel reached India in a similar manner. In 1833 the Canadian ship "Royal William," which took only seventeen days to sail from Quebec to London, was the first that crossed the Atlantic wholly under steam. In 1840 the Cunard Company really began the modern Atlantic service. It built a fleet of large-sized wooden paddle-steamers, and, thanks to its contract to carry the mails, it soon distanced its rivals.

Iron and Steel Ships.—In 1845 appeared the "Great Britain," the first iron ship which was driven by a screw. She made the voyage in fourteen days, but iron ships had an additional advantage over wooden ships in carrying capacity as well as in speed. In 1858 the 24,000 tons of the "Great Eastern" were a startling novelty. She was driven both by paddles and a screw, but her engines of 8,000 horse-power were too weak for their task. However, both in her tonnage and in the size of her iron plates she marked a notable and prophetic advance in the building of iron steamships, and although she was not a success as a passenger ship, she served for many years as a cable-carrier; the first Atlantic cable of 1865, weighing close on 5,000 tons and over 2,600 miles long, was paid out from tanks on board the "Great Eastern" as she crossed the Atlantic. In turn steel superseded iron in ship-building, thanks to the discoveries of Bessemer and Siemens, and after 1874 the size of steel ships increased till vessels of 50,000 tons are used for the Atlantic passenger service, although those used elsewhere, especially cargo steamers, are on a less ambitious scale.

Effects of the Development of Shipping.—The increased carrying capacity and security of steamships rendered possible the immense tide of emigration that flowed to America, and in a less degree to Australasia and South Africa. Linked to the home land by steamships, and later by cables, the emigrants were not wholly lost to her, but as they acquired wealth by their industry they became large and profitable customers, and also exported to England the food-stuffs and raw materials she needed more and more. Colonial life offered scope for political experiments, and much of the social legislation found workable in Australia and New Zealand has been gradually adopted in the United Kingdom. The steam-collier rendered possible on a large scale the export of coal, the “getting” of which found employment for a large proportion of the mining population in the northern counties, and again it was the steamship which brought the harvest of the world cheaply to our doors and enabled England to support a so disproportionately large industrial population.

5. THE TRIUMPH OF LAISSEZ-FAIRE.

Breakdown of the Older Social System.—As the Industrial Revolution proceeded the older social system broke down more and more. Not only was there an enormous migration of population towards the new seats of industry in the northern counties, but there was also a positive transformation in the character of the national life. Hitherto political power had been practically confined to the land-owning classes, for land down to the middle of the eighteenth century was still the main basis of the national wealth; the rich mercantile classes of the towns were not as a class directly represented in the House of Commons. The Industrial Revolution, however, pro-

duced two classes of society—the capitalist employer and the artisan—who, though only of slight importance in earlier times compared with the land-owners and agriculturists, came to be responsible for an ever-increasing proportion of the national wealth.

Capitalists and Artisans.—It was possible for the successful employer to join the ranks of the landed gentry and thus influence the ideas of the governing classes: the younger Pitt was not reluctant to bestow peerages on the newly rich whose support might be useful to the authorities. However, the artisans and the older craftsmen, such as the hand-loom weavers, had no means of venting their grievances save by strikes or by forming combinations of doubtful legality in the hope of raising their wages or of bettering their conditions of labour. The older craftsmen were the worse off, as the new machinery had cut down their wages or deprived them of work altogether. Rash speculation on the part of the employers, induced and aggravated by the conditions of the long war, resulted in periods of unemployment for the workers, and the old Elizabethan poor law, as then administered, entirely failed to meet the new social conditions.

Failure of the Old Poor Law.—It has already been pointed out that after the Restoration the central government possessed, or at any rate exercised, very little control over the justices of the peace, who, sitting in Quarter Sessions, were responsible for the local government of England. The commission of the peace was recruited almost solely from the gentry and the more important farmers, and in their hands the Act of Settlement, passed in 1662 to reduce vagrancy, had resulted in binding the peasantry afresh to the soil, since it was all but impossible for a man to secure a "settlement," i.e. a right to

live permanently, outside his native village. With labour so immobile poverty grew apace, and a contemporary observer at the time of the Revolution estimated that about one quarter of the total population of five and a half millions was more or less dependent on the poor rates. It is true that both before and after this date attempts were made to employ the able-bodied poor in remunerative labour, in obedience to the statute of 1601, but, as a rule, these experiments quickly failed, except in the case of some of the towns, such as Bristol. Not only was the unit of effort—the parish—too small and too poor, but it was very difficult to make the paupers work satisfactorily, and financial difficulties were generally the cause of failure.

The Workhouse Act of 1723.—By an Act passed in 1723 a single parish, or several parishes grouped in a "union," were allowed to build a large workhouse in which the poor could be both housed and employed. In practice the result was disastrous to the poor, who were forced into these workhouses. Too often maladministration allowed the workhouses to become hotbeds of filth, disease, and immorality, for a custom arose of letting the management of the poor to "contractors," who assumed all responsibility in return for a fixed payment, which was not even calculated in every case on the actual number of paupers to be cared for. So far as the object of this Act was to decrease the number of paupers relieved and the amount of the poor rate it was successful, for it introduced the "workhouse test," by which the poor were offered the alternatives of the workhouse or no relief; by 1750, although the population of the country had increased by about one fifth in the fifty years, the total poor rate levied had decreased by about one eighth.

Gilbert's Act, 1783.—However, the Act of 1723 was of

too drastic and penal a character really to solve the problem of poverty, which was accentuated and made more complex during the second half of the eighteenth century by the social and economic effects of the new system of enclosures and the spread of mechanical inventions; each of these resulted in the displacement of more labour than could at first be re-absorbed and made self-supporting under the new conditions. Men were compelled to recognise that poverty might be the result of unavoidable circumstances, and accordingly the more humane "Gilbert's Act" was passed in 1783; by this Act groups of parishes were allowed to form "Gilbert's Unions," and the treatment of the poor by these authorities was less open to criticism. The system of contracting for the labour and support of the poor in the Union's workhouse was now carefully supervised by new authorities called "guardians of the poor," who, like the justices of the peace associated with them, were men of higher social status, and often more sympathetic than the old churchwardens and overseers. It was now possible for the able-bodied poor to accept any employment offered in the district, their wages being supplemented by the parish.

The Effects of the Great War.—The administration of the Act of 1601 was further modified by "private" Acts obtained by certain towns and districts, and the Act of 1662 was modified in the labourer's favour in 1795: the overseers could henceforth not prevent him from settling temporarily in the parish to work, but they could remove him to his native parish if he became chargeable to the poor rates. However, the final breakdown of the old poor law must be traced to the effects of the French War even more than to the Industrial Revolution. No one at first anticipated that the war would be of long duration,

and it seemed the obvious thing to remedy the distress among the lower classes by a more liberal administration of the poor law. Arthur Young, after careful investigation, had come to the conclusion that the hardships inflicted on labourers by the growth of enclosures might be mitigated by a revival of the obsolete Act of 1563, under which magistrates should periodically regulate wages according to the price of corn. Some at least of the labourers were agreeable to such a system. State action was on the whole preferable, as it was not likely that the farmers would voluntarily increase wages, but the objection was raised by some of Young's correspondents that, if all workmen were to be paid alike, the lazy or indifferent or otherwise inefficient worker would fail to obtain employment, while the wages of the better workers would be unfairly depressed.

The "Speenhamland" Act of Parliament, 1795.—However, before Young's ally, Whitbread, could persuade the House of Commons to enforce the Act of 1563, the effect of the war had depressed the rural labourer still more by depriving him of the earnings of his wife and children, as wool for spinning became more difficult to obtain. The evil was particularly felt in the neighbourhood of Reading, and the justices of Berkshire, who met at Speenhamland near Newbury in 1795, thinking that trade would soon revive, passed a series of resolutions designed to tide the labourers over the temporary crisis. While they admitted that the poor ought to be helped, they declared against the revival of the custom under which the magistrates issued a scale of day-wages; however, they urged the farmers and other employers to increase the rate of wages proportionately to the rise in the price of food, and they themselves issued a "bread-scale," under which "all poor and industrious men" who could satisfy the local justices

of their need and deserts should receive from the poor rate a grant of money varying with the price of food and the number of their family to supplement their wages. Such a decision was quite within the power of the authorities of the "Gilbert's Unions," and in the same year an Act of Parliament made it legal for the authorities of other parishes to act in the same way.

Disastrous Results of this System.—The rapid growth of this system of out-door relief was perhaps not solely due to philanthropy. However, though it saved England from the fate of France and a popular rising of the starving mob, the result on village life was disastrous. As the war continued it was inevitable that the allowance system should be continued also, and, although the area under the plough tended to increase, wages, except in rare instances, did not rise in proportion. The labourer, now certain of a livelihood, became less and less efficient, and sometimes showed a disinclination to work at all. The farmers complained that they could not obtain labour, while the poor rates rose enormously, and the other rate-payers felt that they were in effect subsidising the low wages paid by the farmers. Able-bodied farm labourers married often solely to obtain increased out-door relief, and the shirker fared better than the honest worker. Immorality increased, since the unmarried mother could obtain an allowance for her children, and was often deemed a desirable wife when she received a considerable amount of parish relief.

Overseers compelled farmers to employ paupers, with the result that free labourers were dismissed, often to become paupers in their turn. The pauper labourers, however, were generally of little more economic value than the unemployed who qualified for parish relief by standing so many hours daily in the village pound. Often

the villagers flocked to the towns and new industrial centres in search of work, and there the overcrowding and want of sanitation produced epidemics which mercifully released many of them from a life of squalor and misery. The fate of those who remained in the villages was hard if they resisted the temptation to throw themselves on the parish. One by one the village industries disappeared, and the labourer who, thanks to his ability to feed stock on the village common or to earn extra money as a thatcher or other kind of country craftsman, had once enjoyed a certain rude comfort now found himself wholly dependent on field labour.

Attitude of the Economists.—Our forefathers were not blind to the state of things around them, but the long period of war necessarily prevented them from giving the requisite attention to the social problem. However, thinking men realised the terrible effects of the existing administration of the poor law, which was roundly condemned by a parliamentary committee of 1824. When the Government did turn its attention to the domestic situation its attitude was largely influenced by the teaching of the "classical economists" as they are called, who professed to be, like the younger Pitt, the disciples of Adam Smith, and were individualists with a great distrust of the value of State interference. In any case, the classical economists would have condemned on economic grounds the existing lavish system of poor relief, and their political philosophy led them to oppose any attempt to revive or modify to suit new conditions the Elizabethan conception that it was the duty of the State to interfere in industrial questions, even to secure the workers the possibility of subsistence.

Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations."—Adam Smith published the *Wealth of Nations* in 1776 before the

Industrial Revolution had produced the new social problem. However, he recognised the importance of commerce and industry in national life, and understood that conditions were changing and that State control of industry should be modified accordingly. He believed that men were the best judges of what was to their own advantage, and that if each man were free to seek such advantage the State as a whole would prosper. He grasped the principle of the division of labour, although of course he did not foresee the lengths to which it would be carried. He was a decided optimist, and in some ways a strong nationalist: he defended the Navigation Acts on the ground that defence was of more importance than opulence, and it is impossible to believe that he would have demurred to State interference on the lines of the Factory Acts. It is important to notice that he believed that wages could rise—and so the conditions of the workers be improved—so long as capital increased faster than population. He knew nothing of an “iron law of wages.”

The Physiocrats and T. R. Malthus.—The French school of economists known as the “Physiocrats” had greatly influenced Adam Smith and taught him to analyse the social conditions around him. However, in France agricultural labourers paid so large a proportion of the heavy taxation that the physiocrats saw in land the sole source of wealth, and the inference was drawn that wages were really determined by the cost of the agricultural labourer’s subsistence: they would only cease to fall when they neared a point beyond which he was unable to exist. A population dependent solely on agriculture might increase to such an extent that it would be finally impossible for it to obtain food in its own country. Similarly in England a certain Anglican clergyman, T. R. Malthus, in 1798 published a famous *Essay on the Principle of Population*,

which had probably for a time more influence on English economic thought than Adam Smith's book. Like the classical economists generally, he assumed that the inferences he drew from prevailing social conditions were immutable economic laws. One of these inferences was the so-called Law of Diminishing Returns: this was the theory that food for the rapidly increasing population could only be provided by cultivating inferior land, and that in consequence the price of food would rise.

The Industrial Revolution had indeed produced a grievous social problem, but Malthus traced the evils rather to the increase of population than to the unchecked working of the economic revolution which had been aggravated by the long war. He thought that historical investigation proved that the main checks on excessive population in earlier times were vice and misery, and he maintained that any attempt to ameliorate the conditions of the workers would only lead to an increase of population, which in turn would reproduce the old condition of wretchedness. His sole remedy against poverty was that men and women should introduce a new check on population by postponing marriage as long as possible.

The logic of his argument seemed convincing and yet his remedy was not attractive nor very feasible: at the same time such a gospel of despair was not likely to recommend itself to the workers, who claimed a right to a greater share of the comforts of life. However, Malthus undoubtedly painted too gloomy a picture. So far from population increasing in a geometrical ratio while food only increased in an arithmetical ratio, as he alleged, the truth is that under proper conditions increased population gives increased control over the earth's riches and so increases capital and renders possible an increase of wages, and so a higher standard of comfort. Moreover, Malthus

did not foresee that vast supplies of food might be obtained from abroad with improved, and so cheaper, methods of transport, and that even poor soil might be made to bear rich crops by careful manuring. He also under-estimated the economic value of the scientific division of labour that followed on the increased use of machinery. Only in backward and misgoverned countries was the theory of Malthus at all consistent with the facts of life.

David Ricardo and the Law of Rent.—David Ricardo, the Jewish banker and friend of Malthus, like the latter formed his doctrines on the contemporary economic conditions as he understood them. Under the pressure of the Great War poor land had to be cultivated to feed the increasing population, and rents, and so the price of food, rose. Ricardo defined rent as the difference in productivity between the best lands and the lands that just repaid cultivation at a given moment. He was really the founder of the classical school of political economy, which assumed that the age of unchecked competition through which England was passing was normal and permanent. Competition and self-interest were the sole important motives of the “economic man” about whom the classical economists theorised, and the earlier writers of the school were pessimists as to the feasibility of any sort of permanent improvement in social conditions through State interference: even humanitarian laws were to be deprecated.

J. S. Mill and the “Wages Fund” Theory.—There was a general belief among this school of thinkers that wages—the artisan’s share of the produce of labour—tended to a minimum, and although much of the popularity of this theory and of the economics of the classical school generally arose from the fact that they formed a convenient cloak for the selfishness of some of the manufacturers, yet

even the philanthropic John Stuart Mill in his *Principles of Political Economy*, first published in 1848, proclaimed the "wages fund" theory, which in effect condemned the workers to accept their employers' terms as the only alternative to no work at all under the capitalist system.¹

The Utopian Socialists.—It was only natural that the artisans and labourers should refuse to accept the conclusions of the classical economists, whose theories were largely a reaction against the optimism of Rousseau and his party. Like Rousseau's school of writers, Ricardo followed the deductive or *a priori* method of reasoning, whereas Adam Smith had followed the inductive—that is, he based his arguments on a study of the past instead of conceptions such as the "noble savage" or the "economic man." Two Frenchmen, Saint-Simon and Fourier, disgusted alike at the excesses of the French Revolution and the misery of the common people under the prevailing economic system, proposed to create a new kind of human society in which the labourer would be worthy of his hire and no exploitation of the poor by the rich would be possible. These utopian socialists, as they are called, were not successful in their efforts, for the members of the new societies were neither economically self-sufficient nor obedient to the rules, but socialism in its various forms became a beacon of hope to the more intelligent workers, and one of the English socialists, Robert Owen, was largely responsible for the Factory Acts and the co-operative societies of later years.

The Utilitarians.—Besides the socialists, who were not at first very important, there were the English Radicals,

¹ It is only fair to add that at a later date, in his *Dissertations*, vol. iv., p. 46, Mill frankly gave up the wages fund theory, which in its crudest form had been first enunciated in the famous *Essay of Malthus*.

more or less avowed followers of Jeremy Bentham. Bentham had sympathised with the aims of the French Revolution in so far as it was an attack on privileged classes and prerogative rights, and his political philosophy—known as Utilitarianism—provided the Radicals with the war cry that the State should legislate “for the greatest good of the greatest number.” The British Parliament before 1832 was at the most representative only of the landed interest, and the workers naturally maintained that it did nothing to improve their bad social and industrial conditions. It passed laws forbidding them to form “combinations” or trade unions to force the employers to raise wages, and strikers met with no mercy. When the workmen asked that the Elizabethan statute of 1563 should be put into operation and wages fixed by the magistrates at a rate that would allow a reasonable standard of comfort, the whole statute was repealed and even legal apprenticeship became no longer necessary in 1813.

The Social Discontent after 1815.—After 1815 conditions became worse: foreign competition revived, work became scarce, and food was dear. Despite the Corn Law of 1815 rents fell, and although the price of corn was too low for farmers to make their old profit, it was too high for the workmen to get sufficient food when wholly or partially unemployed. The social unrest showed itself in rick-burning, rioting, and seditious meetings, but repressive measures, such as the Six Acts which followed on the “Manchester massacre”—Peterloo—of 1819 were worse than useless. Revolutionary movements on the Continent alarmed the existing Tory Government, but a growing party in the House of Commons, led by Lord John Russell, took up the work of the earlier reformers Erskine and Grey, and boldly advocated reform as the

best safeguard against revolution. For a moment the reform party received a set-back from the abortive Cato-street Conspiracy of 1820, in which the assassination of the whole Cabinet was planned by Arthur Thistlewood and his handful of extremists, but this was soon forgotten in the scandalous attempt of the king, George IV., aided by his ministers, to divorce his foolish wife.

Reforms of Peel and Huskisson.—Brighter days dawned when Peel became Home Secretary in 1822 and Huskisson head of the Board of Trade in 1823, for these two men were Tories of the school of the younger Pitt. Under Peel's sympathetic rule the criminal law of England was carefully reformed and savage punishments abolished, for Peel was a disciple of the philanthropist Sir Samuel Romilly, and the new police, nicknamed "Bobbies" and "Peelers" after the minister, kept order far more effectively than the old watchmen or "Charlies." Huskisson was also a reformer of abuses in trade regulations. In 1786 Pitt had carried a valuable reciprocity treaty with France, by which both countries had gained until the French Revolution had revived the old national hostility. Huskisson renewed the work on a larger scale. In 1823 he carried a Reciprocity of Duties Bill, which modified the Navigation Acts in favour of those countries which would make similar concessions. He realised that England's mercantile marine was now safely established and that the reprisals threatened by foreign countries, unless the Acts were modified, would injure England's export trade. In 1824 other Acts freed the wretched silk weavers of Spital-fields from the obligation of having their wages fixed by the magistrates,¹ and modified the Act of Settlement of

¹ This arrangement had been made by an Act of 1773, which had in practice proved oppressive to the workers.

1662 so as to allow men to travel about the country in search of work. At the end of the same year Huskisson increased the possibility of employment by largely reducing the duties on imported raw silk and wool and thus cheapening the cost of manufacture.

Francis Place and the Repeal of the Combination Laws.

—The year 1824 also saw the beginning of industrial freedom for the workers, for in that year Francis Place, the "radical tailor of Charing Cross," one of the ablest wire-pullers of the day, by clever management secured the repeal of the Combination Laws¹ which made it a crime for the workers even to combine to raise wages. Place had himself as a workman suffered under those laws, and he believed that the mere legalisation of trade unions and the right to strike would make for industrial peace, as each side would become more reasonable in its own interest. Joseph Hume, the ambitious Radical chairman of the Parliamentary Commission appointed to enquire into the working of the Combination Laws, and the various witnesses that appeared before it were alike influenced by Place: accordingly the commission condemned the whole system of restriction, and an Act was passed repealing the laws which had formerly prohibited combinations of either masters or men.

Events proved that Place had been far too sanguine, and the industrial disturbances that ensued encouraged the masters to press for a restoration of the old system. Place was glad to compromise on the Act of 1825, which

¹ These Acts, passed in 1799 and 1800, professed to make illegal any agreement, whether verbal or written, which had the object of influencing the rate of wages paid, and it bound in theory both employers and workmen. The Act of 1800 attempted to introduce a system of arbitration in place of strikes. The Government feared the spread of revolutionary opinions.

indeed allowed combinations to be formed, but forbade any attempt at intimidation. However, trade unions received no legal status and even now at common law have neither legal rights nor duties, apart from the individuals composing them. As late as 1833 several agricultural labourers in Dorset were transported "for administering illegal oaths" to members of their trade union, but after 1825 the struggle took on a different form: the Combination Laws as such no longer existed.

The People's Charter.—The death of George IV. in June 1830 caused the election of a new Parliament in the following November. The reform party having a majority, Earl Grey succeeded the Duke of Wellington, who had been Premier since 1828. Place persuaded the Radicals to accept the first Reform Bill, but they expected that it would be followed by a wider extension of the franchise. However, the new middle class House of Commons had no real democratic sympathies and the consequence was the development of Chartism. The "six points" of the People's Charter,¹ first published in 1838, were ostensibly a demand for the establishment of a real democracy, but actually the intention was to use the power thus acquired to carry out a programme of social reform with which the governing classes did not sympathise.

The Reformers and the Social Problem.—Perhaps it is unfair to the party in power to assume that in every case they legislated solely in their own interest, for even Radicals like Place sympathised with the ideals of the classical economists and the later Free Trade legislation.

¹ The "six points" were: (i) universal suffrage, (ii) vote by ballot, (iii) annual Parliaments, (iv) payment of members, (v) abolition of the property qualification for a seat in Parliament, (vi) equal electoral districts.

However, the Chartists saw in the new Poor Law only a device to keep down the poor rates, while the Free Trade legislation seemed to be merely an excuse of the masters for continuing low wages, and an attempt of the mill-owners to get revenge for the Factory Acts which had been supported by the Tory landowners. Probably a majority of the employers and middle class Englishmen who obtained political power by the Act of 1832 owed their prosperity to their own exertions, and to their capacity for taking advantage of the absence of State control of industry. Without being scientific students of political economy they were able to appreciate the bearing of the writings of men such as Malthus and Ricardo upon the existing social problem.

The suspension of cash payments by the Bank of England between 1797 and 1819 had probably been an important factor in the increase of food prices, and in addition the Industrial Revolution had resulted in an artisan population which steadily increased its demand on the available food supply, augmented though that had undoubtedly been by the Agricultural Revolution and the taking of new land under the plough. Fresh difficulties arose in 1825 on account of reckless investment in the securities of the former Spanish colonies in South America, which had recently with British help asserted their independence. Local banks failed, credit became more difficult to obtain, and prices again increased although the demand for labour was less.

The Poor Law Commission of 1834.—The party in power after 1832 appointed the Poor Law Commission, not so much to make a scientific investigation of the problem of poverty as to produce evidence to justify the drastic reform they intended to make. The secretary of the commission, Edwin Chadwick, and many of the members were devoted followers of Jeremy Bentham, the philosophic Radical, and

were firm believers in the maxims of Malthus and Ricardo. The problem did indeed demand instant solution, but probably the changes they recommended were too drastic. They looked upon poverty as an offence against the State due to the shiftlessness of the poor and the reckless way in which they had increased their families since they had become assured of parish relief. A more impartial examination of the problem might have shown them that they were mistaking the effect for the cause. The poor, reeling under the combined effects of the Industrial Revolution and the Great War, required more, not less, State help, but the nature of the help given undoubtedly needed alteration.

The New Poor Law.—The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, based largely upon the findings of the Commission, was a conspicuous triumph for the advocates of *laissez-faire*. By it the administration of the Poor Law was for five years placed in the hands of three commissioners, who received such autocratic powers that they soon came to be known as the "three Bashaws," and the workhouses they controlled were called "Bastilles." Parishes were grouped into unions, with a common workhouse managed by guardians elected by those who paid the poor rate. The workhouse test was once more strictly applied, and the guardians might relieve able-bodied applicants only in the workhouse. Even the impotent poor were to be discouraged as far as possible from seeking out-door relief. On abstract grounds no exception can be taken to the maxim now laid down that the lot of the pauper was to be deliberately made less eligible than that of the poorest independent labourer. However, the Act of 1834 did not solve the problem of poverty. Its authors were Malthusians who believed that the condition of the workers could be improved only by decreasing the number of those who competed for the amount of employment available: they did not believe that the State could

succeed in mitigating the rigour of the struggle for existence or that under an improved industrial system there could be no increase of population that was too great. Unemployment may be a cause equally as it may be the result of idleness and poverty.

The breakdown of the old Poor Law had been largely due to the cessation of that control of the local by the central authorities which had been so marked a feature under Elizabeth and the earlier Stuarts. The "three Bishops" had probably in practice far more power than the Tudor and Stuart Privy Council: they were charged with the duty of drawing up regulations for the management of workhouses and for the formation of unions; they could dismiss Poor Law officials whom they deemed incompetent or inefficient, and they could interfere to protect from dismissal any salaried official who in their view had not justly forfeited the confidence of the guardians.

However, the new system was not popular with the working classes, for the renewed commercial depression in 1836 had brought into prominence its less admirable features; in consequence the powers of the commissioners were for a time renewed only from year to year. By 1842 the storm had somewhat abated and the powers were renewed for five years. At the end of that period the "General Order" of 1847 was issued by the commissioners, and this, somewhat modified later, ensured the administration of the Poor Law on the lines they approved. Subsequent departures from these regulations have been generally in the direction of modifying their severity. Out-door relief—totally prohibited by an Order of 1844—is now allowed under certain restrictions, as it became recognised that the commissioners had not made the regulations sufficiently elastic to meet often widely differing conditions. Little, however, has yet been done in the way of more carefully classifying the

inmates of a workhouse according to their character and the causes of their dependence, although a beginning has been made by the establishment of cottage homes for the children of paupers, so that they may be brought up free from the workhouse taint. After a trial of seventy-five years the "New" Poor Law was unanimously condemned by the powerful commission that reported in 1909 in favour of the abolition both of the boards of guardians and the system of unions. Undoubtedly in many instances the guardians have done their best to administer in a humane spirit a system whose severity can only be defended by comparing it with the want of system it was designed to supersede. However, it has too often happened that the guardians of the poor have merited the gibe that they really looked upon themselves as guardians of the rates.

The Beginnings of Free Trade under Pitt.—The greatest triumph of the *laissez-faire* economists was the conversion of the leading statesmen of both the historic political parties which resulted in the Free Trade legislation of 1842-1860. Whatever justification might be alleged on behalf of the old Mercantile System, it was hardly possible seriously to defend the British tariff at the end of the long war with France. The younger Pitt had intended to reform the tariff he found in existence in 1784, and the actual commercial treaty with France which he made in 1786 was only a small part of his programme. He had been enlightened enough to attempt to negotiate a similar treaty with Ireland in 1785, but had been foiled by the suspicion of Grattan, the Irish leader,¹ and by the jealousy of the English merchants. However, he had been successful in

¹ Grattan's Parliament was in favour of protecting Irish industries and was inclined to sympathise with a demand that the importation of English manufactures should be prohibited.

introducing on a large scale the bonding system which Walpole had vainly proposed to set up, and his Commutation Act passed in 1784 had rendered smuggling less profitable and also increased the total yield of the customs, although the actual duties on tea and spirits were reduced. In 1787 he established a Consolidated Fund by which he simplified the collection of the customs duties on certain articles.

Pitt in these earlier days struggled hard to improve the tariff on the lines suggested by his master Adam Smith, and his plan—speaking generally—was ultimately to transfer the burden of taxation from the poorer classes to the shoulders of those better able to bear it. When the French war made it necessary for him to increase the revenue he introduced Succession Duties and an Income Tax. Much against his will, he had to resort to loans to finance the war, and his Sinking Fund scheme was a well-meant if ultimately disastrous attempt to pay off the burden of the debt as quickly as possible. However, the long war ruined his schemes and the necessity of finding revenue to pay the interest on the swollen National Debt had made the problem of tariff reform more important than ever.

Influence of Adam Smith.—The version of the Mercantile System which Dr. Cunningham styles Parliamentary Colbertism received its deathblow when the independence of the American Colonies, first declared in 1776, was officially acknowledged by Great Britain in 1783; the colonies that remained offered little field for exploitation under the old colonial system and even Ireland had been given a large measure of commercial freedom by an Act of 1779. Adam Smith's criticisms had shattered the arguments in favour of a purely national commercial policy; he analysed the nature of foreign trade and proved that in time of peace England would really gain by the prosperity

of her neighbours, if nations exchanged with each other the articles they were best fitted to produce. Hitherto it had been believed that if one party to an exchange gained, the other party was bound to lose. Smith maintained that the Wealth of Nations was best obtained by encouraging each individual to obtain as much wealth for himself as possible. Some of his predecessors had been sceptical of the State's ability to increase the national wealth by interference with commerce except in special cases, and his successors were even less ready than he to recognise any function or interest of the Government apart from the individual.

The National Policy of Frederick List.—It is unfortunate that the younger Pitt was not an original thinker. When the commercial policy of the past proved out-worn, England possessed no statesman able to suggest anything more helpful than that all restrictions should be abolished. In consequence the tyranny of the State over the individual was superseded by the tyranny of capital over labour, and the seeds of social unrest were sown. Colonies which might be no longer exploited ceased to have any value to the individualists, who preferred to invest their capital in foreign lands where it seemed likely to bring in a more immediate material gain. Undoubtedly Britain stood to gain by a free exchange of commodities so long as foreign nations were willing to supply raw materials in return for manufactured goods, which provided employment for British workmen and large profits for the British capitalists. However, Frederick List, the German economist, pointed out that Britain had prospered so greatly under her past policy of rigid protection that she was in a far more favourable economic position than any of her continental rivals. Most of the latter, including the German Zollverein or Customs Union organised between 1819 and 1835, in fear of English competition became converts

to List's economic theory of a national policy, which was in effect a scheme for developing native industries by a protective tariff.

The Merchants' Petition, 1820.—In 1820 a number of London merchants presented to Parliament the historic *Merchants' Petition* in favour of free trade. In it they asked for an inquiry into the question as to how far the existing system of protection was responsible for the depression in trade: they maintained that they personally were sufferers from foreign duties imposed in retaliation for similar duties in England. The House of Commons committee appointed to investigate the matter agreed with the merchants in condemning the existing fiscal system. There was a national debt of £860,000,000, equal to £43 per head of the population, and, in an attempt to raise funds to pay the interest on the debt and the expenses of government, "taxes had been laid upon everything that was taxable, and there was no incident of life in which the pressure of taxation was not felt." Huskisson's reforms, already referred to, were largely the outcome of the Merchants' Petition and the findings of the commission. He was in favour of reciprocity on the lines of Pitt's treaties, but his untimely death in 1830, at the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, cut short his labours in the cause of fiscal reform.

The Fiscal Reforms of Peel.—The Whigs were in power for the next twelve years, but they mainly concerned themselves with political reforms, although the reform of the municipal corporations in 1835 had ultimately an important effect on social conditions in the larger towns by placing the control of local affairs in the hands of a town council elected by the ratepayers. However, there was no great Whig financier, and the commercial crisis that began in 1836 was enough to tax the ablest brains.

Year by year there was a deficit on the national budget, and when in September 1842 the newly organised Conservative party came into power their leader, Sir Robert Peel, found his task much more difficult than that of Huskisson. Like the latter, Peel was a financial reformer of Pitt's school, but he was helped in his reform by the severe criticism of the existing system contained in the report of the House of Commons committee of 1840.

After pointing out that the existing tariff presented neither "congruity nor unity of purpose," and contained apparently no general principles, the report continued: "The tariff often aims at incompatible ends; the duties are sometimes meant to be both productive of revenue and for protective objects, which are inconsistent with each other: hence they sometimes operate to the complete exclusion of foreign produce, and in so far no revenue can of course be received; and sometimes, when the duty is inordinately high, the amount of revenue becomes in consequence trifling. They do not make the receipt of revenue the main consideration, but allow that primary object of fiscal regulations to be thwarted by an attempt to protect a great variety of particular interests, at the expense of the revenue, and of the commercial intercourse with other countries. Whilst the tariff has been made subordinate to many small producing interests at home, by the sacrifice of revenue in order to support these interests, the same principle of preference is largely applied, by the various discriminatory duties, to the produce of our colonies, by which exclusive advantages are given to the colonial interests at the expense of the mother country."¹

¹ It should be remembered that there had recently been a rebellion in Canada and that Responsible Government, recommended by Lord Durham in his Report, seemed to many Englishmen to be merely the prelude to the separation from England of its colonies.

Peel's Budget of 1842 began the reform of the old fiscal system: he repealed or modified a large number of the existing import duties. Quite expecting that at first the loss to the revenue would be considerable, he copied Pitt's expedient of an income tax for three years: at the end of that time he hoped that the increased trade would amply compensate the Government. Like Huskisson, Peel sought to help the manufacturers and their work-people by decreasing the duties on raw materials and partly manufactured goods, and in 1845, encouraged by his partial success and better harvests, he renewed the income tax in order to abolish all export duties and still further modify the remaining import duties. However, Peel's reforms raised up two opposing sets of critics. His proposal to remove the duties on foreign hides and lard alarmed his supporters among the farming interest, and yet he refused to agree to the proposals of the Anti-Corn Law League that the Corn Laws should be abolished. Peel maintained that it was in the national interest that the supply of home-grown food should be protected so as to be available in case of war.

The Anti-Corn Law League.—The Manchester Anti-Corn Law League was founded in 1839 by two Lancashire manufacturers, Richard Cobden and John Bright, to focus the energies of a movement of a much earlier date. English manufacturers knew by experience that they could dispense with protection for their wares at home, and foreign competition long remained negligible. However, their zeal for free trade in corn also was due to their belief that, if they could produce their wares cheaply and so control foreign markets, they could induce foreign nations to agree to an international division of labour which would leave England the workshop of the world, to be supplied with food and raw materials by other lands. A pre-

dominantly industrial England could not hope to provide its own food and raw materials except at a prohibitive cost, nor could it export its manufactures unless it would agree to accept in return the products of other lands; thus the most promising markets for English manufactures were just those whose exports were penalised by the Corn Laws.

Many free traders believed that the international division of labour would abolish war, and so they could not see any real advantage in the Corn Laws; and as they were ready to allow the colonies to separate from the mother country, they had no sympathy with the view that the existing tariff preferences on colonial corn, sugar, timber, and other products were at best inadequate compensations for the commercial restraints of the old colonial system. The Corn Laws certainly meant dear food, and the manufacturers realised that either wages must be raised or the Corn Laws abolished. The former course seemed unthinkable, for the manufacturers were not likely to question the comfortable economic doctrine of the wages fund, which maintained that if the workmen obtained more wages either the master obtained less profit or he had to increase the price of his goods and so risk the loss of his foreign markets. Even now it is not always realised that cheap labour is too often inefficient, and so dear labour; but "the economy of high wages" is greatest where masters and men agree that the best possible use shall be made of the expensive machinery used in modern industry, and such an agreement has not yet been reached in England. To abolish the Corn Laws was therefore the course favoured by the manufacturers: the Corn Laws apparently benefited the landlords, and the share of the latter in the enactment of the hated factory legislation of 1833 and later years increased the manufacturers' zeal.

Failure of the Corn Law of 1815.—For some time past it had been realised that the Corn Law of 1815 required modification. Harvests had varied and prices had fluctuated widely, but neither farmer nor artisan had been helped: in time of scarcity it was not easy to keep the price low by importing food, and even a good harvest was of little benefit to the farmer with taxes and rates so high. The opponents of the Corn Law had an easy task so far as criticism went. John Bright, the orator of the party, appealed to the nobler feelings of his hearers, but Richard Cobden knew how to play on the prejudices of different audiences by his intimate knowledge of the working of the Corn Laws, and never hesitated to argue before the farmers and their labourers. He pointed out that the Kentish hop-grower paid for the protection of his hops, since he in turn had to pay a duty on the wheat he ate, which was taxed for the benefit of the grower; the latter in turn had to pay high poor rates, for, as food was dear, the labouring classes were sinking more and more into poverty; ultimately, the argument was, only the landed interest benefited by the high rents which the Corn Laws alone made possible.

Sliding Scale or Total Repeal?—The original Corn Law of 1815, under which foreign wheat was practically excluded, was modified in 1822 by the introduction of a "sliding scale" of duties varying with the price of English corn. In 1828 Wellington again modified the scale in favour of the consumer, and through the breach thus made by a Tory Government the Whigs repeatedly poured to the attack. However, few Whigs of importance favoured the total repeal of the duties: the favourite Whig scheme was a small fixed duty. Charles Villiers for some time fought the battle for repeal almost alone in the House of Commons, but after 1839 Bright and Cobden

began a deliberate campaign to popularise the programme. The Chartists openly scoffed at the manufacturers' remedy for popular miseries, but the Anti-Corn Law League were helped by the bad harvests and bad trade, and when in 1842 Peel still further modified the sliding scale Villiers pleaded hard for total repeal.

Peel's Conversion to the Policy of Total Repeal.—Theoretically, Peel was convinced that low import duties generally were probably in the long run as advantageous to the revenue as to the consumer, and, as has been stated, framed his budgets more and more on free trade principles. However, not being an internationalist, he was by no means certain that the supplies of cheap foreign wheat so confidently promised by Cobden would be available in time of war, even if Continental nations would be content to accept manufactures in return for raw materials in time of peace. As a practical statesman he could not ignore the close connection between nationalism and protection in past wars. The Anti-Corn Law League began a series of special monthly meetings in Covent Garden Theatre which made many converts, but no one realised how near the crisis was. The official Whigs were not convinced of the wisdom of total repeal, and as late as 1839 Melbourne, the Prime Minister, had declared that "to leave the whole agricultural interest without protection was the wildest and maddest scheme that ever entered into the imagination of man to conceive." However, the bad trade and high food prices of the "Hungry Forties," as the free traders called the period, did their work, and towards the end of 1845 it was realised that for the first time since 1841 the harvest was everywhere poor, and that the Irish potato crop, which was the main food of quite half the population, had failed entirely.

Russell continues Peel's Policy.—Peel had been already

shaken in his views by Cobden's arguments, and only the Irish famine was required to complete his conversion : possible famine in time of war seemed a lesser evil than actual famine in time of peace. His decision to repeal the Corn Laws wrecked both his party and his own career, and it was only by the help of Russell, the Whig leader, that he was enabled to carry his bill to abolish all duties on imported corn after three years, except for a nominal registration duty of 1s.¹ (June 25th, 1846). When Russell succeeded him as Premier he in turn could count on Peel's steady support against the Conservative Protectionists, now led in the House of Commons by Benjamin Disraeli. Peel died in July 1850, and most of his followers eventually coalesced with the Liberals. Russell was a less able man than Peel, and had a difficult task to reconcile his Whig and Liberal followers and to meet the demands of the Irish and the Chartists in 1847 and 1848. However, he continued Peel's programme in 1849 by abolishing the poor remnants of the Navigation Acts left unrepealed by Huskisson. The colonies were thus freed from the last traces of the old colonial system. English manufactures and shipping were certainly strong enough to dispense with the support of the Navigation Acts, and the general expectation was that the colonies would before long part peacefully from the mother country.

Complete Free Trade established by Gladstone.—The final establishment of free trade in the United Kingdom was the work of Peel's disciple, William Ewart Gladstone, who became Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Aberdeen's coalition ministry of Whigs and Peelites formed in December 1852. In the following April he introduced the first of his many free trade budgets, and the era of

¹ This also was abolished in 1860.

steadily improving trade that set in after 1848 ensured the success of his experiments in the direction of making a "tariff for revenue only." The first International Exhibition, held in Hyde Park in 1851 at the suggestion of the Prince Consort, seemed an augury of better relations among the peoples of Europe. Gladstone to a large extent shared the belief of Cobden and Bright that the growing economic inter-dependency of the great nations would make war less probable in the future. The marvellous "leaps and bounds" of trade that followed his first budget seemed to his optimistic mind to have been caused by it. However, he pointed out in 1853 that if war did come it could be financed by means of the income tax. The Crimean War, which ended in 1856, was the last great war in which England took part for nearly sixty years, while on the Continent there was almost constant war until 1871. Thus Gladstone's fiscal policy was never seriously tested by war or called into question by economists until the marvellous prosperity of the United States and Germany under a system of strict protection caused inconvenient comparisons to be made between the condition of the working classes in those states and in free trade Britain.

Unpopularity of Free Trade abroad.—Both Peel and Cobden had hoped that other nations would follow the example of the United Kingdom and adopt free trade. Cobden's prophecy that free trade would soon be the common policy of all civilised nations arose from his honest belief that foreign nations such as Russia and the United States would not trouble to establish manufactures at home when they could obtain British-made goods so much more cheaply in return for their own raw materials. However cosmopolitan Cobden might be in theory, he was curiously insular in his knowledge and outlook, and he had no sympathy

with the national feeling which led the Americans and the German Zollverein to desire to foster home industries by tariffs. He was misled by the existence of a small free trade section among French publicists, and he did not understand that the attitude of Napoleon III. was due to a desire to stand well with England from political motives.

The Cobden Treaty, 1860.—Although disappointed at the attitude of foreign nations, Cobden and his friends were not dismayed; they maintained that in any case free trade was the best policy for England, and that the best weapon against high tariffs was free imports. However, Cobden was not above using the tariff for bargaining purposes, and in 1860 negotiated in a semi-official capacity the famous Cobden Reciprocity Treaty with Napoleon III. in the face of the vehement hostility of the French protectionist manufacturers and many of the politicians. This treaty was not ostensibly a departure from free trade principles for Gladstone's tariff of 1860 which embodied the concessions to France professed merely to complete the work of 1853 by abolishing the last traces of the old protective duties. Actually while the tariff was supposed to throw open the British market to all nations on equal terms, the new lower duties on wine and brandy could only benefit France; they were in fact the price paid to Napoleon III. in return for his promise to change the French policy of prohibition to one of comparatively low duties on certain British staple exports.

The Later Reciprocity Treaties.—Great Britain certainly gained by this treaty of reciprocity, and accordingly the objections of the more extreme free traders were disregarded. The advocates of reciprocity were encouraged by their success in carrying similar treaties during the next few years with Belgium, the German Zollverein, and other

states; they could maintain with some show of truth that their policy was leading the European nations to adopt "sound" economic principles, since they were all becoming linked together by a network of reciprocity treaties. However, it must be remembered that even in the United Kingdom neither the policy of free trade nor that of reciprocity was passed by a really democratic parliament, and it is impossible to maintain that the Cobden treaty was popular in France. In the case of the other treaties, the native manufacturers complained bitterly that they merely stereotyped the existing supremacy and advantages of the United Kingdom that had accrued to it from the early adoption of machinery.

Revival of Protectionism.—When the success of Germany in 1871 turned Europe into "an armed camp" national consciousness and the need for wealth to provide for the new conscript armies made the European governments turn their backs upon such inter-national ideals as free trade and reciprocity. The existing treaties shared the fate of Cobden's, which was modified to England's disadvantage by the new republican government, and soon only the dubious advantage of the "most favoured nation clause" remained. The new foreign tariffs became more and more protectionist, but Gladstone, the Liberal leader, refused to change his views from principle, while Disraeli from motives of expediency was unwilling to champion what seemed to be in England the lost cause of protection. A foreign policy of "splendid isolation" seemed to promise continual prosperity and immunity from war, but actually there was a growing discontent with the working of the British industrial system, due on the part of the workmen to cycles of bad trade, and on the part of some of the masters to the pressure of German and American competition in their particular industries. Towards the end of

the nineteenth century the current of popular opinion had once more begun to run strongly in favour of State interference in social and industrial matters, but the interference was to be by a democratic State with the object of securing the interest of its members as a whole rather than that of kings or particular individuals.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAKING OF MODERN ENGLAND.

1. INTRODUCTION.

Influence of Robert Owen.—Although the Industrial Revolution at first apparently resulted in a middle class House of Commons, which between 1832 and 1867 legislated in the interests of its constituents as completely as had the nobles and landed gentry, there were other ideas fermenting among the people besides the stark individualism of the *laissez-faire* school. While the Benthamite allies of the classical economists were arguing in favour of a simplification and re-organisation of the machinery of government, both central and local, the socialists called for the organisation of labour, so as to free the working man from the clutches of the capitalist and his wages fund theory: Robert Owen's schemes for a universal trades' union of all workmen were tried and failed, but other ideas of that fertile brain, such as Factory Acts and Co-operation, met with more success, for the former could find support from philanthropists such as Michael Sadler, Richard Oastler, and Lord Ashley (Shaftesbury), while the latter was enthusiastically championed by the Christian socialists whose leaders were Tom Hughes, Charles Kingsley, and F. D. Maurice.

The Physical Scientists.—In 1856 appeared Darwin's epoch-making work *The Origin of Species*, followed in 1871 by his *Descent of Man*. The writings of Darwin and Alfred Russell Wallace popularised the theory of evolution which became the foundation of the new sciences of biology and sociology, while Herbert Spencer devoted the labours of a long life to an examination of the problem of human society. Perhaps the efforts of these great thinkers, and of the physical scientists such as Huxley and Tyndall, were of value more from the spirit of free enquiry which they fostered than from their actual success in solving the problems they considered, but they laid the foundations of a more hopeful view of future progress for all classes. Political economy had well earned the name of the "dismal science" in the form it assumed in the works of its earlier professors, but even so early as 1848 John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* had struck the note of a more optimistic view, and the economists found their "laws" vigorously challenged by writers such as Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin.

Carlyle and Ruskin.—Perhaps Carlyle was better at criticism than at constructive reform, but his clarion call for duty and service as being nobler than the mere heaping up of wealth and the creation of a "calico millennium" appealed to the better side of the prosperous middle classes of early Victorian England. Carlyle was a strong individualist, but his "hero" or great man was one who laboured for the good of others—the weak and helpless who in the age of fierce competition were being trampled under foot. A great friend of Mill, whose hesitating humanity he translated into a prophet-like denunciation of wrong-doing, at times so fierce as to be hardly coherent he was also the inspirer of a greater thinker than either Mill or himself. John Ruskin in 1871 dedicated *Munera*

Pulveris to Thomas Carlyle as "the friend and guide who has urged me to all chief labour," and if *Munera Pulveris* was not, as Ruskin claimed, "the first accurate analysis of the laws of political economy," it certainly focussed men's minds on the real nature of the so-called "laws of political economy," and stripped them of all claims to reverence by the new democracy.

Causes of National Prosperity.—The trade union leaders and the working men generally were willing to put these infallible laws to the test of experiment, but when successive strikes resulted in increased wages without ruining industry they were apt in some cases to forget that while Ruskin on the one hand maintained that the labourer was worthy of his hire, he also declared that a fair day's work should be given for a fair day's wages. However, it was not generally realised that the increased prosperity of England which enabled a larger population to obtain higher wages was due to conditions not foreseen by Malthus and his school. Quite apart from the effect of the gold discoveries in California and Australia and the crippling of European competition by the long series of wars between 1859 and 1871, there was the ever-widening influence of the conscious application of science to industry. Since 1856 there had been a Government Department of Applied Science and Art, largely the result of the impression made on the Prince Consort by the First International Exhibition of 1851, and the activities of this department created a new race of research students, whose work of deliberate investigation in chemistry, physics, and engineering was destined to have far more influence on social conditions than the haphazard inventions of earlier days. The new scientific processes and machinery have so enormously increased and cheapened the national output of commodities that the real as well as the nominal rate of

wages has risen ; and not only has the popular standard of comfort been improved, but the more abundant leisure arising from shorter hours has given the people of all classes the opportunity to widen their outlook and deepen their knowledge : since 1870 education has become ever more widely diffused, and a cheap and free press has done much for the service of the new democracy.

Attitude of the Working Classes.—It was perhaps natural that the democracy should be dissatisfied with the existing industrial system, but the comparative ease with which trade unionism proved itself able to remedy the more serious grievances prevented the appearance in England of a strong and militant social democratic party. The chief sufferers during the periodic industrial crises have been the unfortunate artisans and labourers who form the “industrial reserve” which is apparently necessary to the working of the capitalist system. Attempts have been made by legislation to provide them and the workers generally with insurance against sickness and unemployment. Among the less well paid workers voices have been occasionally raised in favour of “syndicalism”—that is the management of an industry by those who work in it rather than by capitalist employers, and there are also signs of clashing interests between the unions of the better paid workers and the others.

Foreign Competition.—During the last thirty years certain English industries have felt increasingly the competition, both at home and in neutral markets, of strongly protectionist nations such as Germany and the United States : in these countries the native manufacturers have been assisted by a high tariff, and perhaps even more by the application of scientific research to industry to an extent unknown in England. In consequence, vigorous attacks have been made on the existing English tariff

policy of one-sided free trade. Those in favour of copying the German and American system of scientific tariffs have been considerably helped by the growing feeling in favour of closer union with the great self-governing Dominions, which are as a rule strongly protectionist. The result of the war and the part played in it by the Dominions and India will doubtless be a re-organisation of the Empire, and it has been suggested that the preservation of the Empire's great natural resources for the benefit mainly of its own members will go far to solve the problem of the demand of an increasing industrial population for a certain supply of food and raw materials. Whatever be the policy ultimately adopted, the social outlook is comparably brighter now than at the corresponding period of the previous century: there is now little distrust of State action among any class of the community, and a watchful press and an enlightened public opinion will see to it that State control alike of industry and social life shall be exercised only in the common interest.

2. RE-ORGANISATION OF THE CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

The Radicals.—The detailed story of the creation of the democracy belongs rather to political history, but a brief reference to the course of events after 1832 may not be out of place here. The Reform Bill of 1832, with its £10 franchise in the towns and its 40s. freehold and £50 rental qualification for the county electorate, established a middle class oligarchy in place of the old landed aristocracy ruling through a corrupt House of Commons. The new system, though certainly an improvement on the old both as to franchise and electoral areas, could not possibly content either the philosophical Radicals (the Benthamite

Utilitarians) or the political Radicals, who formed the basis of the new Chartist party. Lord John Russell, the protagonist of the first Reform Bill, won the nickname of "Finality Jack" and the hatred of the Radicals by insisting that further change was inexpedient, but there could be nothing sacrosanct about the £10 franchise, and legislation on the lines of the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 and the repeal of the Corn Laws was in the eyes of many of the unfranchised but a poor substitute for their *People's Charter* and the right to legislate in their own interests, as they maintained the middle classes were doing.¹

The Blurring of Party Lines.—Economic distress embittered the strife, but the moderate minds among the middle classes were reassured when the "year of Revolution" (1848) passed by in England with nothing more serious than the futile Chartist demonstration on Kennington Common, and Thomas Carlyle had taught them that there was really a "condition of England question." The Peelite schism in the new Conservative party insensibly led to a blurring of party lines in the "fifties and sixties," and the era of good trade which set in after the gold discoveries in California and Australia enabled politicians to form the most optimistic views as to the future of the human race. There were as yet no party "machines" or central organisations, and men liked to sit on the political fence with such hazy labels as Liberal-Conservative and Conservative-Liberal. After Peel's resignation no Ministry had a stable majority till Palmerston's victory in April 1857. Perhaps the material prosperity of Palmerston's régime led men to acquiesce in his opposition to political reform, but on his death in October 1865 his

¹ See *ante*, p. 289.

attitude was abandoned by Lord John Russell (Earl Russell since 1861), who next year allowed the old Peelite W. E. Gladstone to introduce a Reform Bill.

Gladstone's Reform Bill of 1866.—Former proposals had failed to pass, although few members of the House of Commons professed to be wholly opposed to reform. However, free from the overpowering personality of Palmerston, Gladstone was able by his eloquence to persuade the "classes"—the already enfranchised—that they had nothing to fear now from the "masses" of the voteless, since the interests of the two were not really antagonistic. Actually, many of the skilled artisans were organised in strong trade unions and were demanding the franchise as a means to fight their bourgeois employers on more equal terms. When in March 1866 Gladstone introduced his Bill a section of the Whigs went into opposition and formed what John Bright called their "Cave of Adullam." Their "David" was Robert Lowe, whose experiences of the working of democracy both in Australia and the United States had caused him to dread its introduction at home.

The Second Reform Act, 1867.—Ultimately, the only result of the Adullamite secession was that the nominal author of the Reform Bill passed in 1867 was Benjamin Disraeli, the new Conservative leader. Gladstone, defeated on an Adullamite amendment, had resigned, and although Disraeli would have preferred a longer time in which to "educate his party"—he had already weaned it from protectionist principles—he was quite willing to "dish the Whigs"¹ by accepting household suffrage in the towns

¹ Disraeli had first declared that the artisans did not want the franchise, but he was clever enough to interpret correctly the riot which ensued on the prohibition of a trade union demonstration in Hyde Park in favour of the Bill.

with a £10 lodger franchise and a £12 rental as a modification of the former £50 in the county franchise. In its original form his Bill had provided a scheme of what were scornfully termed by the Liberals "fancy franchises," by which education and thrift were to be recognised, but the only novel feature accepted by the House of Commons was the expedient of "three-cornered constituencies," in which, as the electors were only allowed to vote for two candidates, it was possible for minorities to have a representative. An amendment by Mill in favour of female suffrage was rejected by 196 votes to 73.

The second Reform Bill of 1867 was the real beginning of the democracy, and it was a good thing that many of the new voters had already learnt the art of self-control and self-government in their trade unions. The Adullamite leader Lowe before the Bill passed might sneer at "the people who lived in small houses," but when he was faced with the accomplished fact he re-echoed Brougham's words, "Now we must at least educate our new masters." It is to the credit of the middle classes and the artisans alike that the former were willing to teach and the latter to learn the methods of parliamentary government. The two historic parties had each able leaders in Gladstone and Disraeli, and for a time the new democracy was content to divide its allegiance between them, although Gladstone naturally secured a majority at the election of 1868. Gladstone was willing from principle to concede as many pressing reforms as the Whig section would allow, and Disraeli was too clever a parliamentarian to interpret the new Conservatism as mere obstruction.

Further Democratic Measures.—The passing of the first Elementary Education Act in 1870 was only the prelude to a series of reforms which had a lasting effect on English social life. In the same year the Civil Service was de-

mocratised, in accordance with the recommendation of a Royal Commission, by the throwing open of the majority of the appointments to free competition: hitherto such appointments had been filled by patronage—that is by the nominees of Ministers and Members of Parliament—even if they were not frankly given to political partisans. It was fortunate that the transition to the new system was made before the new democracy had acquired a taste for the American custom of “spoils to the victors,” for the existence of a non-political permanent Civil Service is essential to the smooth working of the central government of a democracy. In 1871, after some little difficulty, an Act was passed to abolish religious tests as a condition of taking a degree at Oxford and Cambridge Universities: it was a natural sequel to the abolition of such tests as conditions of citizenship in 1828 and 1829. In 1872 the old Chartist proposal for a secret ballot became law, and henceforth no voter needed to fear victimisation for his political opinions, either by his employer or by his fellows. Already in 1854 a “Corrupt Practices Act” had attempted to lessen the importance of wealth in political contests, and in 1858 another Act had abolished the “property qualification” for a seat in the House of Commons, and so made it possible for an artisan to take his seat there. At the election of 1874 two working men members, Messrs. Burt and Macdonald, obtained seats, and Disraeli, despite his majority, showed himself willing to go even farther than Gladstone in meeting the wishes of the new electors, especially as to trade union matters.

The attitude of the artisans towards the Central Government was most praiseworthy; they were content to leave the initiative to Gladstone so far as general policy went. Accordingly the Premier was able to pass an Act in 1870 to regulate the control of the army. By an Order in

Council the Commander-in-Chief was placed under the Secretary of State for War, but a further proposal to abolish the custom of the purchase and sale of commissions, which had practically made the commissioned ranks the close preserve of the aristocratic and moneyed classes, was opposed by the House of Lords. Gladstone was no doctrinaire democrat, and calmly abolished army purchase by Royal Warrant, as it existed solely by royal authority. The Lords then gave way, and also passed an Act restoring to the Crown, *i.e.* to the Ministry in practice, the authority over the military, yeomanry, and volunteers which the Tudors had conferred upon the Lords Lieutenant of the counties. Thus the army, like the Parliament, was brought definitely under the control of the democracy. In 1871 the Central Government was further strengthened by the creation of the Local Government Board, which was intended to secure the control and efficient working of the various local government bodies, and in the following year was passed the first of the many Licensing Acts which have aimed at the erection of a stringent system of State control over the manufacture and consumption of intoxicating liquor. Gladstone's last great constructive reform was the Supreme Court of Judicature Act of 1873, which organised the various quasi-independent law courts as branches of one Central High Court of Justice and set up a Court of Appeal for Civil Cases.

Influence of the Irish Problem.—The election of February 1874 gave Disraeli a following of 350 Conservatives to 244 Liberals, for Gladstone had disappointed the trade unionists by his submission to the Whig manufacturers in the matter of the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1871. However there were also 58 Irish "Home Rulers," who introduced into the House of Commons a problem which

no democracy could refuse to face. When Daniel O'Connell had secured Roman Catholic Emancipation in 1829 he tried without success to bring about the repeal of the Union of 1800 by constitutional agitation. His failure was the ostensible excuse for the "Young Ireland" rising of 1848 and the Fenian movement of 1867, but as Irish difficulties were at least as much economic as constitutional in their character the various Coercion Acts that were passed only aggravated the situation. Gladstone had disestablished and partially disendowed the Irish State Church in 1869, and in 1870 he passed the first Irish Land Act, which was a half-hearted attempt to conciliate the peasantry by "preventing the landlord from using the terrible weapon of undue and unjust eviction" and made a beginning of State-assisted land purchase. His fall in 1873 had been nominally caused by his Irish University Bill, which pleased nobody, and just before the election of 1874 the Irish Home Government Association, first organised in 1870, formally took the title of the Home Rule League. It demanded a federal system, under which an Irish parliament should receive power to legislate for Ireland on purely Irish questions.

Disraeli's Tory Democracy.—Disraeli did not fear the new democracy, and indeed hoped to convert it to his own idea of national as opposed to class solidarity by redressing actual grievances, and by showing his sympathy with social as opposed to political reform. Accordingly, he passed legislation to placate the trade unions which perhaps postponed for a generation the appearance of a definite labour party. He was willing to pass Lord Cross's Artisans' Dwellings Act of 1875 and the Agricultural Holdings Act, which secured to outgoing tenant-farmers compensation for unexhausted improvements,

while, as a sort of compensation, another Act allowed landlords formally to register their titles. In the same year he passed a useful Merchant Shipping Act, which, among other reforms, established the "Plimsoll line," which safeguarded sailors from the danger of an overloaded vessel. However, he vigorously opposed the Home Rule proposals of Isaac Butt, the Irish Federalist leader, and he was equally unwilling to agree to Trevelyan's plan to complete the democracy by conferring the franchise on the agricultural labourer. So unwilling was he to take an heroic line in domestic politics that, when the depression in trade and agriculture culminated in the disastrous year 1879, he refused to champion his old cause, protection, and contented himself with appointing a commission to investigate the causes of agricultural distress.

Gladstone's Irish Policy.—The result was that Gladstone was able to use Disraeli's vigorous but not very successful Balkan policy to secure his defeat at the election of 1880, and as Disraeli, who had been created Earl of Beaconsfield in 1876, died in 1881, his rival was supreme in Parliament. However, although there were 349 Liberals to 243 Conservatives, there were now also 60 Home Rulers, and the Home Rule movement was passing into the hands of more violent men, such as Michael Davitt, whose Irish Land League, formed in 1879, deliberately set itself to make all constitutional government impossible till its demands were granted. The Irish leader in the House of Commons was Charles Stuart Parnell, who by an adroit mixture of violence and diplomacy convinced Gladstone that mere repression was useless. The Premier tried to buy Parnell with every concession short of Home Rule itself, but the extremists, known as the "Invincibles," rendered peace hopeless for the time by the senseless murder of Sir Frederick Caven-

dish, the new Chief Secretary, and Burke, the Permanent Under-Secretary, in Phoenix Park, Dublin, on May 6th, 1882. Gladstone felt that the law must be vindicated, and reluctantly forced through Parliament the Prevention of Crimes Bill and a drastic system of closing the debates, which to a certain extent restrained the agitation both in Ireland and at Westminster.

The Third Reform Act, 1885.—Gladstone's second ministry was unfortunate, for he could please neither Whigs nor Radicals at home, and his foreign policy, especially in Egypt and the Transvaal, was no more successful than his Irish policy. Even his greatest triumph, the passing of the third Reform Bill, all but miscarried through the opposition of the House of Lords. The Bill proposed to confer the franchise on the county householders irrespective of the amount of rent paid, and so complete the work of 1867. However, the Lords saw that the result would be the enfranchisement of the Radical agricultural labourers, who were naturally more numerous than the Conservative tenant-farmers, and their pronounced opposition led to Liberal threats of "ending or mending" the House of Lords. Queen Victoria tactfully made peace by persuading the Lords to give way on condition that a further Bill for the redistribution of seats was passed at the same time. The result of the two measures, finally passed in 1885, was that a common democratic system of household suffrage was established both in town and country, and that the new constituencies were roughly equal in size, and in the majority of cases returned a single member. Unfortunately, as no provision was made for the automatic redistribution of seats in accordance with changes in the population, glaring discrepancies soon arose, and huge suburban constituencies, such as Romford and Wandsworth, equally with small

Irish towns, such as Kilkenny and Newry, were represented by a single member.

The Effects of the European War.—The war tended to calm party feelings, and with scarcely any opposition two important Acts were passed in 1918. The Fourth Reform Act adopted the principle of Woman's Suffrage and drastically reformed the electoral system on democratic lines, practically abolishing plural voting, and making all votes as nearly as possible of equal value, while the Education Act sought to develop to the full the natural capacities of the future electors so as to make democracy real. In 1919 the Local Government Board was absorbed in a new Ministry of Health with very wide powers, and the establishment in the same year of a new Ministry of Ways and Communications to deal with transport conditions generally was a reform long overdue. The grant to Old Age Pensioners, dating from 1911, has been increased, and the State Insurance Scheme against sickness and unemployment has been improved and extended. The carry-over from war to peace conditions of industry was facilitated by a liberal system of unemployment allowances, and far-reaching schemes of house-building and industrial arbitration have been initiated by the Government. However, grave problems still remain to be solved: there are demands for the nationalisation of the railways and of the mines, and the future relations between Ireland and the Empire have been rendered more difficult by the rise of the Republican Sinn Fein movement.

The Reorganisation of Local Government.—One of the outstanding features of the nineteenth century was the reorganisation on democratic lines of English Local Government. © Jeremy Bentham and his disciples, especially Edwin Chadwick, the secretary to the Poor Law Commission of 1834, had been most anxious to bring

about a simple and uniform system of local government in place of the chaos of often inefficient local authorities then existing. The older corporate towns were under the control of practically self-elected Councils whose powers were quite inadequate, and whose goodwill was too often wanting when the need arose for reforms in sanitation, lighting, or other municipal matters. In many cases, for example Liverpool and the various urban districts of London, the only legal government was that of the vestry in some form or other, with power to levy a poor rate or a church rate, but to do little else. The Industrial Revolution had resulted in the transformation of villages into large urban centres where the only organ of local government was the vestry, and in the absence of any provisions against insanitary habits and overcrowding filth diseases carried off large numbers of the inhabitants yearly. Some towns had obtained local Acts of Parliament creating statutory bodies of Town Improvement Commissioners to carry out duties such as road-making and lighting, but robbery and disorder were rampant everywhere, as the only regular police were the old and inefficient watchmen known as "Charlies"; armed with a lantern and a pole they paraded the streets after night-fall, calling out at intervals the state of the weather and the hour, but quite helpless to put down footpads and other disturbers of the peace. In 1829 Peel, then Home Secretary, established the first efficient police in London, called after him "Bobbies" and "Peelers," and in course of time all local authorities in counties and towns were ordered to establish similar bodies of drilled constabulary in their districts.

Creation of "ad hoc" Bodies.—The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 created the first of the many *ad hoc* bodies, that is bodies designed for carrying out specific

local duties—the Board of the Guardians of the Poor, who were elected by the ratepayers of the union of parishes to manage the workhouses and the new system of poor relief. The unions did not necessarily coincide with any previously existing area, and the Guardians were subject only to the three irresponsible Poor Law Commissioners. By 1847 these latter had been superseded by the Poor Law Board, whose President had a seat in the House of Commons and was thus made responsible for his actions, and also able to defend himself against criticism. However, so hap-hazard was the reconstruction of English local government that in the following year, 1848, when successive attacks of cholera had at last drawn national attention to the disgracefully insanitary condition of the country generally, the Public Health Act set up an entirely independent Central Board of Health with inspectors whose duty it was to arrange for the erection of Local Boards of Health throughout the country. These Local Boards, which had power to remove nuisances dangerous to health and to prevent the erection of insanitary buildings, did not correspond to the Poor Law unions in area, even when in 1871 the new Local Government Board absorbed both the Poor Law Board and the Central Board of Health, and the confusion was not remedied by the existence after 1870 of the School Boards erected with independent boundaries in various parts of the country under the Education Act of that year.

Reforms in Urban Government.—The urban areas fared better on the whole, for the Municipal Corporations Act of 1835 drastically reformed the old self-elected corporations on an elective basis and provided for the creation of popularly elected town councils responsible to the local ratepayers in all towns of a reasonable size. The increased powers of the new councils allowed them, for

example, to improve the water supply and so the public health of their area, and the Public Health Act of 1848 empowered them to provide gas for their area either by a municipal undertaking or by contract with a gas company. A few years later it was proposed that tramways should be established in certain towns, and the Tramways Act of 1870 and the Light Railways Acts of 1896 and 1912 have been taken advantage of in many cases; most of the larger municipalities own their local tramways, which are now generally worked by electricity. More recent legislation has imposed on civic bodies duties of housing and town-planning, and the municipal ownership of all public utilities is favoured by many social reformers.

Reforms in County Government.—Local government in the counties for long remained frankly aristocratic, and was carried on by the justices of the peace—indirectly the nominees of the Crown through the Lord Chancellor and the Lords Lieutenant—meeting in Quarter Sessions, where they assessed the rates needed to defray the expenses of county government, and made such orders as were necessary. However, in 1888 the Conservative Government set up popularly elected County Councils with large powers of control in their representative areas, although the independence of urban areas with a population of 50,000 was safeguarded by reckoning their local governing body as a county council. The Local Government Board was given the task of co-ordinating and to a large extent controlling the actions of the new authorities. The experiment has on the whole been a decided success, and many of the justices of the peace and the local gentry continue to take a prominent part in local life, if under a different qualification. The Education Act of 1902 transferred the control of education in their area to the County Councils, and it

seems probable that they will shortly be called upon to administer a reformed Poor Law. An Act of 1889 set up a body known as The London County Council for the City and the urban areas around it, with extensive powers, although a later Act of 1900 replaced the vestries of the urban parishes by a series of elective municipal councils with considerable local independence.

Parish and District Councils.—The reorganisation of local government was carried on by Gladstone, who by an Act of 1893 set up a system of councils subordinate to the County Councils, with powers varying according as they served an urban district, a rural district, or a parish, and even the smallest parish was granted certain rights of local government through a parish meeting. Naturally the older Local Boards of Health disappeared, but the enlarged powers of self-government granted by the Act of 1893 have led to many improvements in village and country life.

3. THE REVIVAL OF STATE ACTION.

The Decay of State Interference.—The tradition of State action was never wholly abandoned in England even during the heyday of *laissez-faire* principles, although from Walpole's time it had begun to weaken. It remained strongest of course among the landowners, but paternalism of the type of the Speenhamland system was due partly to a desire to avoid agrarian troubles, and partly to the pride of the *grand seigneur* in the welfare of his tenantry, who were expected to repay his care by submission to his superior knowledge of what was to their advantage.

Attitude of the Manufacturers.—The manufacturers, who owed their prosperity to the Industrial Revolution,

were, on the contrary, strong individualists. Without being consciously cruel they desired to buy their labour in the cheapest market at prices fixed purely by competition, and defended their action by the doctrines of the classical economists, such as the Wages Fund. Even before the era of mechanical inventions the system of State regulation of apprenticeship and wages, based on the Act of 1563 and kindred legislation, had begun to break down, and in any case was quite inapplicable to the new conditions of the factory system. The new factories, especially those worked by water power, were generally to be found in the north beside lonely mountain streams, and, although a few adults were sufficient to oversee the labours of the children and young persons who could mind the spinning machines, the local population was so scanty that it was found necessary to take children from south country, especially London, workhouses. In theory the pauper children were bound apprentices to their new masters, and they were taken away in wagons to the distant north. It was said that the factory owners agreed to take one idiot child in twenty.

The "Health and Morals of Apprentices" Act, 1802.—The conditions of life even in the best mills were bad, for the children were insufficiently clothed and fed, they had too little sleep and practically no education, and the housing and sanitary arrangements were so primitive that epidemics were common. In 1784 an outbreak of fever in some of the Lancashire cotton mills so alarmed the local justices that an enquiry into the matter led to a recommendation by them that the Central Government should have more control. The Manchester Board of Health, instituted in 1795, had the support of the better mill-owners such as the elder Sir Robert Peel, and its recommendations were embodied in the "Health and Morals of Apprentices"

Act of 1802—the first of the modern Factory Acts. Henceforth no legal apprentice in a cotton or woollen mill could be worked more than twelve hours a day ; night work was forbidden, and the apprentices were to be granted better clothes, more decent sleeping accommodation, and a certain measure of education ; the factories were to be properly ventilated and frequently whitewashed as a sanitary precaution. The justices of the peace were ordered to enforce the law, and visitors were appointed to see that the Act was really carried out.

Failure of the Act.—In practice the Act was a failure. Some of the apprentices had neither heard of it nor enjoyed its provisions several years after 1802. The visitors and the justices were themselves mill-owners or friends of mill-owners, and not only was the Act not enforced, but it was openly evaded by the institution of a new practice by which the pauper children and others were not legally apprenticed, but only engaged for a term of years. Thus the system of apprenticeship received a blow, for temporarily it paid the master to escape legal responsibility for the food and clothing of his employees, especially as a long apprenticeship was not necessary for the working of the new machines. However, the gain was short-lived, for both the supply and the value of labour decreased and the results to the physique of the succeeding generation were disastrous, while the attitude of the employers aroused an ugly temper in the workers which showed itself in industrial rioting, especially after 1815.

Views of Robert Owen.—Robert Owen, when joint owner of the New Lanark mills near Glasgow, had proved that it was not only possible but also profitable to reform the conditions of factory life by voluntary action, and he attempted to persuade other mill-owners to follow his example, or, failing that, to obtain State interference

between them and their victims. His communistic views intensified the normal difficulties of his task, and the second Factory Act, passed in 1819, disappointed him in its working. As the Act only applied to cotton mills, which were now largely worked by steam and did not trouble to employ legal apprentices, it had little effect. No child under nine might be employed, and the working day of children and "young persons" between nine and sixteen was fixed at twelve hours, night work being prohibited. Once more the Act was easily evaded, largely from lack of adequate inspection, but if the mill-owners made out their case that child labour was necessary, Robert Owen had aroused men's consciences to admit that it should and could be protected in some measure by the State, and the Act of 1819 was amended in 1825 and 1831.

Work of Oastler, Sadler, and Ashley.—However, Owen's work had now won champions who were more persuasive or at any rate more successful. The great names are those of Richard Oastler, the Tory philanthropist of the West Riding, whose interest in the West Indian slaves led him to champion the slaves in England, and the noble-minded Michael Sadler, who obtained from the unreformed Parliament a commission to investigate the conditions of factory life. Despite the exaggerations, more or less conscious, of the witnesses before this commission, the case for fresh legislation was amply proved; and although Sadler paid for his efforts by failing to retain his seat, the cause he had championed found an able defender in Lord Ashley, later seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, who as a member of the first reformed House of Commons obtained the famous commission of 1833.

The Commission of 1833.—This time the evidence was more carefully sifted, but, after allowing for the undoubted fact that conditions varied largely, from fair in the west

of England to very bad in the newer mills and factories of the north, the verdict was that the factory system had a bad effect both physically and morally on those who were to be the parents of the succeeding generation. Miserable as was the life of many of the domestic workers at this time, that of the factory hands was worse, for they were confined for long hours in the mills, where bullying was rife and general conditions unhealthy, and at times they were without employment at all. It was curious to find the Radical Joseph Hume defending the capitalist mill-owners and maintaining that the people's distress was wholly due to the Corn Laws and the consequent high price of food. Naturally the Chartists at a later date preferred that the manufacturers should increase wages instead of advocating the repeal of the Corn Laws, but it was alleged that the manufacturers' zeal for abolition was largely due to an unworthy desire to revenge themselves on the aristocratic landowners who had forced on the Factory Acts; probably the desire for cheap labour also had a share in determining the attitude of the manufacturers.

The First Factory Act, 1833.—The result of the commission was the passing of what is generally known as the First Factory Act, 1833. The most useful innovation was the institution of paid independent inspectors who had to report breaches of the law to a central authority. The reports and suggestions of these inspectors undoubtedly largely influenced for good later factory legislation. However, Ashley like Robert Owen was not satisfied with the details of the Bill as passed, for both men were at one with Sadler in desiring a legal "ten hours" day; the Act of 1833 certainly provided that no child under thirteen should work more than eight hours daily, but children and young persons between thirteen and eighteen might

work twelve hours daily, and all night work by children and young persons was forbidden. Nothing was done to limit directly the hours of adults, and so the struggle for a shorter working day continued.

Later Factory Legislation.—The series of Acts that were gradually placed on the statute-book are best considered as dealing first with children, then with women, and finally with men. Slowly loopholes for evasion were blocked up, and the opposition weakened when once the Act of 1833 had formally established the principle of State interference. An Act of 1844 secured for women the right to the twelve hours day of "young persons" and legalised the half-time system. Three years later another Act cut down the hours of children and young persons to ten, and practically affected the hours of adult males also. An attempt on the part of the masters during the prosperous year 1848 to get round the Act by running the machinery for fifteen hours and using relays of the workers protected by statute led to the Act of 1850, which forbade the employment of the latter except between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. and granted them an hour and a half for meals during that period. It was still found possible to work children in relays, and so the master could keep the adult males in the mill after the women had left. However, an Act of 1853 established a normal ten and a half hours day for all except adult males, and these latter were automatically affected also, as it did not pay to run the mills solely for male labour. By 1874 it was forbidden by law to employ any child in a factory under ten years of age. The Extension Act of 1867 had already extended the system of regulation to any building where more than fifty persons were employed for gain, and finally after some tinkering the "Factory and Workshops Act" was passed in 1878, by which the various regulations were codified and special arrangements were made for

factories and workshops.¹ Later factory legislation has generally taken the form of providing additional safeguards for the workers or of including other trades. The last great consolidating act was the Factory and Workshops Act of 1891, which forbade entirely the employment of children under 12 in such places.

Success of the Factory Acts.—By this time it was generally realised that Robert Owen was right in his contention that the produce of labour in the textile trades, or indeed in any trade where the machinery used required steady human supervision, did not increase proportionately with the hours of labour. Economists are now studying the effects of "industrial fatigue," as it is called, but their predecessors were inclined to the view of Nassau Senior, who opposed the Factory Acts on the ground that by checking production they would seriously affect the trade of the country, the profit of the capitalists, and so ultimately the prosperity of the workmen. However, the frequent and flagrant attempts of the employers to evade the law had the worst possible effect on the workmen. The latter were now organising themselves into strong federated unions, and by strikes, parliamentary pressure, and at times by collective bargaining as equals with their employers, they forced from them better conditions of service. The Amalgamated Society of Engineers, founded in 1850, was strong enough by 1871 to win a nine hours day by a successful strike, and other workers such as miners and textile operatives have established the tradition of elaborate working agreements with their employers by which disputes as to conditions of labour may be settled as far as possible without strikes.

¹ Technically a "workshop" is "a place of industry" where mechanical power is not used.

The Mines Acts.—The very intensity of the evils that prevailed in factories and mines helped to provide the remedy. Lord Ashley's success in the textile factories led him to tackle the equally flagrant abuses of women and children's labour in the coal mines. An Act of 1842 made their conditions of labour more tolerable, and in 1850 the miners, thanks to their trade unions and the help of sympathisers, obtained from Parliament the Mines Regulation Act, which provided for the appointment of government inspectors of the pits, with far-reaching powers. In 1860 another Act allowed the miners of each pit to appoint a check-weigher, in order that where men's wages depended upon the amount of work done an accurate and independent account might be kept. Despite occasional and sometimes disastrous strikes the condition of mine-workers has steadily improved, thanks to the support given by popular opinion to legislation and Home Office regulations. In 1908 the miners secured an eight hours day "from bank to bank" and in 1913 an Act¹ came into force which guaranteed the miners a minimum wage.

Welfare Legislation.—However, it is to the credit of the nation that Parliament was not content with legislation merely in the interests of powerful trade unions. During the past half-century many laws have been passed to reduce the dangers to children's welfare by raising the age at which they may commence work, and by protecting them alike from bad conditions of labour and the carelessness or selfishness of their parents. Other legislation has been passed in favour of the underpaid or "sweated"

¹ This was the Coal Mines Act of 1912, which instituted Boards of Arbitration (District Joint Boards) representing both coal-owners and their workmen; public opinion is generally powerful enough to cause both parties to accept the awards thus made.

workers in certain industries, who could find no help in trade unionism because of the unskilled and fluctuating nature of their work ; in 1909 Parliament provided for the appointment of Trade Boards with power to make regulations and fix wages in certain specified industries, such as ready-made tailoring, where the conditions were very bad.

Employers' Liability Acts.— In the case of the more independent workers legislation has been rather on the lines of providing for their dependents. For example, Lord Campbell's Act of 1846 was amended in 1880 by the Employers' Liability Act, under which the employer is liable to the extent of three years' wages in case of death or injury of a workman, the only defence being contributory negligence: the earlier Act had thrown on the deceased's relatives the duty of proving that the accident had occurred solely through the wilful negligence of the employer. By an Act of 1906 the whole scope of such legislation was widened and all employees, with very few exceptions, were able to benefit: an injured employee was entitled to receive weekly payments equal to half his usual wages, and the legal representative of the victim of a fatal accident could recover damages up to £300. The need of such provision is undoubted, and the institution of a system of cheap insurance has removed any hardship to the employer. Under an Act of 1909 an elaborate system of linked Labour Exchanges has been established by the Board of Trade, mainly for the benefit of the unskilled and semi-skilled workers, and in 1911 the National Insurance Act made it compulsory for all who are paid at a lower rate than £160 a year to insure themselves against sickness in some "approved" society, the employer and the State being responsible for part of the premium. A beginning was also made of a system of insurance against unemployment in the case of certain trades.

Justification of State Interference.—Criticisms have been passed on these revivals of the Elizabethan system to meet modern needs. It has been alleged that such paternal legislation destroys the self-reliance of the worker and weakens his character; that it increases the cost of production and, as the classical economists said, handicaps the British manufacturer in competition with his foreign rivals. Writers such as Charles Dickens, Carlyle, Ruskin, and Kingsley have been held responsible for such “pampering legislation”; it is said that they have taught the working classes to look to the State for doles, instead of learning to provide for bad times by their own exertions. Probably the answer to such charges is merely to point to the native helplessness of the classes benefited. Unemployed workers quickly become unemployable and are thus a burden to the State. The new legislation may be faulty in details, but surely the ideal is sound, since it is simply to develop to the utmost the happiness, and so the usefulness and productivity, of the individual citizen. To deny that duty to the State is merely to preach again the exploded creed of Malthus.

4. EDUCATION.

Education in England.—One of the most encouraging results of the new democracy has been the revival of interest in all branches of education. Thanks to the researches of patient investigators, we now know that education in medieval England was comparatively widely diffused and of a high standard. However, the Black Death in the fourteenth century, followed by civil war in the fifteenth and the troubles of the Reformation in the sixteenth, threw education into confusion. The Renaissance brought in new methods and ideals. William of Wykeham,

the founder of Winchester School in 1382 and New College in 1379, had worthy successors in Dean Colet, founder of St. Paul's School in 1509, and Cardinal Wolsey, the real founder of Christ Church, Oxford. It would have been well for England if the spoils of the monasteries had been wholly devoted to education. The Tudor sovereigns who are claimed as the founders of new grammar schools too often only reorganised older foundations, and the state of English education fell very low in the sixteenth century both at schools and universities, despite the work of such great thinkers as Ascham, Erasmus, More, and Warham. There was no attempt at a national system, for the rivalry of Anglicans and Puritans, even in the early seventeenth century, led each to prefer the foundation and endowment of party institutions. Laud's work at Oxford was paralleled by that of others at the more Puritan Cambridge, and Oliver Cromwell vainly attempted to establish a new type of university at Durham. However, interest in education never really died out: the writings of the Moravian teacher Comenius were translated into English and he was warmly welcomed when he visited England in 1641-2. Himself an avowed follower of Bacon, he in turn inspired Milton and Locke, and Milton's *Tractate on Education* (1644) and his *College of Husbandry* (1651) were the precursors of the Eton edition of Lily's *Latin Grammar* (1692) and Locke's *Thoughts on Education* (1693).

Influence of Sectarian Disputes.—It seems probable that sectarian difficulties were at the bottom of England's failure to establish a national system of education, such as that which was set up in Scotland in 1696. Two years later there was founded in England the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, the first of several organisations which made the education of the poorer classes their care, but the system of charity schools which

they set up was by no means sufficiently extensive, nor was the standard of education satisfactory. In 1781 the Dissenter Robert Raikes, of Gloucester, founded the first "Sunday School," in which the poorer classes also obtained the elements of secular learning.

Work of Lancaster and Bell.—In 1796 Dr. Shute Barrington, Bishop of Durham, and Sir Thomas Bernard founded the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor, and this society soon concentrated its efforts on the promotion of education. The year 1798 saw the beginnings of the educational work of the Quaker Joseph Lancaster in Borough Road, Southwark, but the Royal Lancasterian Society itself dates from 1808, and its successor, the British and Foreign Schools Society, from 1810. Lancaster proposed to make up for the deficiency in the supply of qualified teachers by setting the brighter children—known as "monitors"—to teach the less advanced. Probably he owed the original idea to Dr. Andrew Bell, who had been an Anglican missionary at Madras, and whose plans were taken up by the rival Anglican National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, which was founded in 1811 and played an important part in the educational history of the nineteenth century.

The Beginnings of State Aid.—Lancaster, though inclined to be somewhat eccentric and self-willed, was able to inspire others with his zeal for education, and undoubtedly influenced the establishment by Robert Owen of the New Lanark Schools. However, Dissenters and Anglicans were equally opposed to a national system of education, and in 1807 Whitbread's Bill to establish a system of parish schools was lost. But the State could not remain inactive altogether, for men's consciences were being roused by the revelations made as to the ignorance and misery of the children of the lower classes, especially those engaged in

factories. In 1833 the first State grant, £20,000, towards education was shared between the two rival societies ; in 1839 the annual grant was raised to £30,000, and henceforth a committee of the Privy Council, with a vice-president and secretary, existed with power to inspect State-aided schools. The rival societies were both suspicious of the new policy of inspection, but the tact of the committee's secretary, Dr. Kay-Shuttleworth, won the consent of the National Society in 1840 and of the British and Foreign Schools Society in 1843.

Training Colleges.—However, the religious question caused the abandonment of a scheme for a State Normal School in 1840, and four years later there was substituted in its place the practice of State building grants for denominational training colleges. So bitter was the sectarian feeling that in 1843 the Dissenters were able to procure the abandonment of a proposal by the Ministry that pauper and factory children should be compelled to attend parish schools : the objection was raised that such a system would increase the influence of the parish priest. It was this fear of strengthening the Church that led Dissenters to oppose for so long all schemes of State-controlled education, and the Congregationalists refused all offers of public funds for their schools till 1867. Liberals as a party favoured the financing of education by voluntary effort, which they feared would be injured by rate aid and parish schools, while the Anglicans and Dissenters agreed only in opposing both a conscience clause and a purely secular system of education.

Payment by Results.—But the obvious fact had to be acknowledged : education on voluntary lines failed both in quantity and quality. In 1846 the monitorial system had broken down so completely that it was replaced by the pupil-teacher system, borrowed from the Dutch ; the bet-

ter pupil teachers were awarded "Queen's Scholarships," and the State agreed to pay part of the cost of training in the denominational colleges. From 1853 efficient schools were able to earn a capitation grant, and by 1860 the State expenditure on education had reached £800,000. The prejudice against State education began slowly but surely to break down, but, in the absence of any proper system of local government in England, it was difficult to devise a scheme for that decentralised management of the schools which seemed advisable. The Newcastle Commission of 1856-1861 reported in favour of rate aid to education: the authority to levy the rate was to be the council in the case of the larger towns, but for the counties a non-representative board of education was to be appointed by Quarter Sessions. However, the Liberal Government preferred to fall back upon centralisation—with disastrous result. In 1861 Robert Lowe, the Vice-President of the Council,¹ introduced a new system of State payment. His "Revised Code," as it was called, made the grant to the individual school depend wholly upon the results of a government examination. This system of "payment by results" was the parent of wrong methods and low ideals in elementary school teaching. The policy of inculcation, or "cramming" the children so that they might earn the maximum grant in the essential subjects, narrowed the curriculum and cramped the interest of both teacher and taught. However, the practice lasted till the introduction of the block grant in 1904, by which yearly examinations were abolished in favour of a system of irregular inspection, and at last higher ideals and better methods of education became possible.

The Vice-President was in practice, if not in theory, Minister of Education.

The Education Act of 1870.—By 1865 the grant to education had fallen to £635,000, but despite the Government's desire to economise, circumstances were convincing even keen voluntaryists like Lord Brougham that a wider view was necessary, especially after the Second Reform Act had enfranchised the town artisans. "We must educate our masters" may have been half intended as a sneer by Lowe, but Gladstone, as a High Churchman and a Liberal, realised that in the national interest some compromise must be effected. In 1870 the new Vice-President, Forster, introduced the first Education Bill: government grants were still to be continued to denominational schools, but in areas where a majority of the inhabitants desired to supplement the existing voluntary schools the ratepayers were empowered to elect *ad hoc* or special bodies known as school boards, which might levy a rate to build and maintain additional schools and also receive a government grant for such schools if efficient. In its final form the Bill pleased nobody, for many of Gladstone's Liberal followers were demanding a system of education which should be free, compulsory, and unsectarian, while the Birmingham League, representing the Dissenters, bitterly opposed the grant of public money to Anglican schools. Gladstone had tried to appease his critics by inserting a "conscience clause" which enabled children to be withdrawn from religious instruction in State-aided voluntary schools, and by accepting the famous Cowper-Temple clause under which "all catechisms and distinctive dogmatic formularies are excluded from rate-aided schools." However, he succeeded only in bitterly offending the Anglicans, and the School Board elections were too often fought on sectarian lines, with grievous consequences to education.

Effect of the Act of 1870.—However, national interest

in education was thoroughly aroused in all classes after 1870, and attendance was indirectly made compulsory for all children by an Act of 1876. Instead of supplementing voluntary effort, some of the school boards entered into definite competition with it, and the Voluntary schools, now largely Anglican schools, felt the competition very severely, especially when education in the Board schools was made free in 1891: they had to lower or even abolish their fees if they wished to obtain scholars in competition with the Board schools, which, having the local rates to draw upon, were generally better equipped.

The Demand for Secondary and Technical Education.—

The Act of 1870 had not allowed secondary schools to receive aid from the rates, but with the raising of the standard in elementary schools there had naturally come a desire that higher education should also be brought within reach of all fit to profit by it. In 1888 county councils had been created by the Local Government Act and supplied a universal democratic authority more suitable than the sporadic school boards for the local management of education and less likely to be crippled by financial difficulties and sectarian disputes. A beginning was made with the Welsh Intermediate Act, 1889, which allowed the Welsh county councils to supply education of a higher than elementary standard. This was followed by an Act of 1890 dealing with technical education. The prevailing depression in trade called attention to national deficiencies in that respect, and the local authorities were given power to appoint Technical Education Committees whose duty it was to expend on technical education a Treasury grant known from its source as "whiskey money."

Condition of Secondary Education before 1902.—Twelve years more elapsed before the State decided that it was its duty to make provision for secondary as well as for elemen-

tary and purely technical education. Apart from the public schools such as Eton and Harrow and a number of ancient endowed grammar schools there had been practically no opportunity for a boy to obtain higher education in England far into the nineteenth century, and the education of girls had been left to the "academies" and finishing schools so often described by novelists. Private schools for boys existed here and there, but the standard of education possible with ignorant and underpaid teachers was low, and Dickens' famous description of Dotheboys Hall was probably rather an exaggeration than a caricature of them. The improvement in the ideals of the secondary school was largely due to the exertions of Thomas Arnold, headmaster at Rugby (1828-1842), and during the reign of Queen Victoria a number of secondary schools were founded by private companies¹ which placed a good education, often on definite religious lines, within reach of both boys and girls of the middle and upper classes. However, there was no formal attempt made to provide higher education for the better pupils in the elementary schools beyond the establishment in certain towns of a wholly inadequate number of scholarships.

The Cockerton Judgment.—The necessity for educating its pupil teachers had led the London School Board deliberately to overstep its powers during the later years of its existence, and its successor the London County Council continued its policy of providing education of a higher than elementary standard in "higher grade" schools and "pupil teacher centres." This practice was tentatively followed by other bodies, and though it was declared illegal by the "Cockerton judgment" in 1901, the State

¹ Examples are the *Woodard Society* for Boys' Schools founded 1848 and the Girls' Public Day Schools Trust.

had to meet the difficulty by temporarily legalising it. In the following year the highly controversial Act of 1902 was passed; it gave the County and Borough Councils power to provide higher as well as elementary education, and education entered upon a new and promising phase.

The Education Act of 1902.—Under the new Act the sporadic School Boards were abolished and the local administration of education was placed in the hands of Education Committees appointed by the County and County Borough Councils, which might be strengthened by members of either sex co-opted for their knowledge of educational problems. A Local Education Authority was now as a matter of course to give rate aid to the efficient voluntary or non-provided schools in its area, but once more neither Anglicans nor Dissenters were satisfied: the latter demanded that even the head teacher in a non-provided school should be free from religious tests, and the former objected to the Kenyon-Slaney clause under which the Local Education Authority was to appoint two out of the six managers who were to control the religious instruction given.

Later Developments.—However, the Act of 1902 has worked very well on the whole: both primary and secondary education have greatly improved, although the amount spent on the latter is ludicrously small in proportion, and a definite attempt has been made to give the newer generation of teachers a better general education and technical training by the institution of bursaries at secondary schools and by the multiplication of State-aided training colleges. Nevertheless many of the existing secondary schools are the result of private enterprise or philanthropy, and the Board of Education until recently tended to deal with secondary education rather by suggestions than regula-

tions. The non-provided, now mainly Anglican, schools have so far successfully resisted the attempts of various Liberal Education Ministers after 1906 to absorb them into a national system, but there was less opposition to Acts like that of 1906, which allowed the Local Education Authorities to assist voluntary efforts to feed necessitous school children, or the Act of 1907, which made them responsible for the medical inspection of the children under their charge. In 1918 Mr. Fisher, the Minister of Education, carried a new Education Act, which not only extended the existing facilities for primary and secondary education, but also prevented the exploitation of child labour by establishing a system of compulsory education in Continuation Schools for all young persons under the age of 18.

The Older Universities.—University education in England fared even worse than secondary education, and was at its nadir in the eighteenth century. The Oxford Movement of the "thirties and forties" called attention to life at the older universities, but they remained close Anglican preserves till the abolition of University Tests in 1871. An unsectarian university proposed for London could not obtain a charter till 1836, and for many years afterwards the only other university in England was that of Durham, at first a definitely Anglican institution, founded in 1831 by the Dean and Chapter. However, statutes passed in 1854 and 1856 reformed the government and curriculum of Oxford and Cambridge respectively, but even London refused to grant degrees to women until 1878. In the meantime Women's Colleges had been founded both at Oxford and Cambridge: Girton (1872) followed by Newnham (1875) at the latter, and Lady Margaret Hall and Somerville, both founded in 1878, at the former.

The Newer Universities.—The "seventies" also saw the rise of the newer provincial universities. Owens College,

Manchester, the earliest, joined with colleges at Leeds and Liverpool to form the federal Victoria University, which later split up into three distinct universities, and a similar federal university, with constituent colleges at Aberystwyth, Bangor, and Cardiff, was formed in Wales in 1893. Other local universities have been recently founded at Birmingham, Bristol, and Sheffield, and there are also university colleges at Exeter, Nottingham, Reading, and Southampton, many of the students there qualifying for the external degrees of the University of London. At Newcastle-upon-Tyne the College of Medicine and Armstrong College have been recognised as the Newcastle Division of a re-organised University of Durham.

The curricula of the newer universities and university colleges are much wider than those of the older institutions, and make more provision for Science, both pure and applied, than do the latter, while their Arts courses are largely taken by the elementary and secondary teachers from the training colleges, often attached very closely to them. The newer universities are legally only private corporations with a royal charter, but they receive a varying, though always inadequate, grant from the Treasury and the local authorities. However, they have justified their existence, and in the near future will probably be brought into closer relations both with the State and local educational institutions, when the "broad highway" of education has replaced the present unsatisfactory "scholarship ladder."

Abolition of the "Taxes on Knowledge."—One of the most beneficent reforms of the nineteenth century was the abolition of the "taxes on knowledge," as a result of which the education of the adult, and so the success of the democracy, became possible. The Press automatically obtained its freedom when Parliament refused to renew the

Licensing Act in 1695, and this freedom seemed secure when Fox's Libel Act of 1792 left it to a jury to decide both the publication and the fact of an alleged libel. However, by later anti-revolutionary legislation, especially by the "Six Acts" of 1819, the freedom of the Press was sternly curbed under the pretext of punishing blasphemous and seditious libels; heavy stamp duties were imposed on newspapers and newspaper advertisements, and no publication could under such restrictions rival the circulation of Cobbett's *Weekly Register*, which was 50,000 in 1817. Ardent Radicals defied the savage punishments for selling unstamped publications, and largely as a result the stamp duty was reduced in 1836 and finally abolished in 1855. The advertisement duty had been taken off in 1853, but the handicap of a heavy paper duty remained till 1861.

The Penny Post, Telegraph, and Telephone.—Side by side with the abolition of these definite obstacles to the free communication of knowledge and ideas there had gone on a positive process of reform and invention which favoured the growth of general education. The postal reforms introduced by Rowland Hill in 1839 were supplemented in their effects by the growing use of the telegraph, especially when the various companies were taken over by the Government in 1870. The later invention, the telephone, became increasingly used after 1890, and in turn became a Government monopoly in 1913. In 1895 Marconi, utilising an earlier discovery by Herz in 1888, made his first successful experiments in wireless telegraphy, which promises to supersede the electric cable and is already indispensable as a means of communication with ships at sea both in war and peace.

The Education of the Democracy.—The spread of education after 1870 awakened in the working classes a desire

for knowledge and an interest in the world outside their immediate surroundings, just as the inventions already referred to, helped by improved processes of printing and paper-making, made possible the provision of the penny and ultimately of the halfpenny newspaper. Even illustrated newspapers can now be produced cheaply, thanks to improvements in lithography and photography, and have a far-reaching effect on our knowledge and understanding of world events. The existence of a cheap and free press, by widening the range of the average man's ideas, has caused him to take an interest in the general literature of England, and in some cases of foreign countries. An Act of 1842 placed the law of copyright on a sounder basis, and later legislation in 1911 even included an International Copyright Convention. The introduction of cheap editions, reprints, and translations has proved to be enormously successful in recent years, and has made it possible for the poorest members of the democracy to study all that is best in the world's science and literature in the "University of Books." It is now agreed that dulness and ignorance are the greatest foes to true liberty, and the democratic Parliament has passed legislation which allows local governing bodies to provide libraries, museums, art galleries, and parks, so as to encourage people to make good use of their leisure.

The Economic Influence of Science.—No sketch of the educational history of the past half-century would be satisfactory if it did not call attention to the economic influence of science, for the leisure we now enjoy is largely the result of the substitution of machinery for hand labour, which has enormously increased the output of commodities while at the same time it has decreased their price. The keynote of the new attitude towards scientific discovery was struck by Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*,

first published in 1859.¹ The theory of evolution which he enunciated in that book has been criticised scientifically as well as perversely, in the latter way largely because in his *Descent of Man*, published in 1871, he apparently went counter to the Old Testament in tracing the origin of the human species to a creation near akin to an ape. However, Darwin's evolutionary theory, sometimes known as "the survival of the fittest," was above all else the result of careful study of evidence, and the very boldness of his speculations encouraged the belief among scientists that the human intellect properly trained could solve all problems.

The Earlier Inventors.—Darwin's theory came at a propitious moment for its task of accomplishing the union between pure theory and practical application, which had been lacking in the case of the earlier inventors. The mechanical inventions of the eighteenth century had done their work in their original form by wasteful and clumsy methods. They were seldom if ever the result of scientific study, although Watts' success with the imperfect Newcomen steam-engine should have pointed out the better way. Little attention was given to the discovery of oxygen by Priestley, and no one apparently understood the importance of the chemical studies of Lavoisier, Scheele, and Davy, or of the discovery by Watt and Count Rumford that heat is a form of energy.

Davy and Faraday. Importance of their Work.—Early in the nineteenth century Ampère, Davy, and Faraday were laying the foundation of the new science of electricity, of which Galvani and Volta had been pioneers. The great engineers, such as Stephenson, were not so much

¹ Another great thinker, Alfred Russell Wallace, had independently arrived at a similar conclusion about the same time.

trained scientists as practical business men, and the scientist was seldom considered to have any practical use; it is a curious coincidence that Sir Humphrey Davy's safety-lamp for use in mines, invented by him in response to a request in 1813, found its most serious rival in the "Geordie" lamp of the self-taught engineer George Stephenson. However, this early divorce of infant science from practice was not wholly bad, for the help that such science could have brought was small. Michael Faraday was an exception, and we cannot be surprised that, as he was often consulted by manufacturers, he was driven by his comparatively straitened circumstances to consider the advantages of using his knowledge in industry and abandoning his scientific investigations. According to Professor Tyndall, Faraday's decision to sacrifice material gain to science was made about 1827, that is on the eve of his making those investigations in electro-magnetic induction which are in so large a measure the foundation of the utilisation of electricity in industry.

Work of Kelvin and Pasteur.—We can almost date the conscious union of the scientist and the practical man to the First International Exhibition of 1851 and the Prince Consort's protégé, the Science and Art Department of South Kensington, which resulted from it. The invention of the electric telegraph struck men's imagination by its practical utility, but quite as important in its own way was the establishment of the law of the conservation of energy by Lord Kelvin and his co-workers in 1848—the third¹ great foundation-stone of modern physical science. If energy could neither be created nor destroyed the scientist could investigate its workings by the aid of mathe-

¹ The other two are Newton's Law of Universal Gravitation and Lavoisier's Law of Conservation of Mass.

matics, and by laboratory experiments invent better means for its utilisation in the factory and workshop. Science teachers and students multiplied everywhere, and their zeal for research was raised to a white heat by the attacks on Darwinism. They were further encouraged by the commercial value of the researches of Louis Pasteur of Lille, who by 1861 had discovered the means of preventing the souring of wine, and by 1866 had saved the French silk trade by stamping out the silk-worm disease. It would take too long to describe Pasteur's services to bacteriology and incidentally to surgery, since Lister's anti-septic theories and their successors owe their real origin to him.

Discovery of Aniline Dyes.—In 1858 Perkin patented his process for the preparation of a mauve dye from coal-tar, and thus began the commercial exploitation of the hydrocarbon compounds of which we cannot yet see the end. It is true that the chemists of other nations, more fortunate than Perkin in receiving support and encouragement from their governments and private firms, have used his invention to enrich their own countries, but of recent years English manufacturers have shown themselves more alive to the importance of organic chemistry, and the Government has removed some of the restrictions that prevented the commercial exploitation of alcohol.

The Commercialisation of Science.—Perhaps the economic influence of science has never been more conspicuous than when the early discoveries of Faraday, Clerk Maxwell, Lord Kelvin, and Joule as to the nature and production of electricity were commercialised by the invention of the dynamo by Edison and Hopkinson. Soon tramways and trains and even small ships were driven by electricity; it was applied as an economical motive power to machinery as well as for purposes of

illumination after 1890, and more recently still it has been used as a rival to gas for purposes of heating. However, in none of these uses has it wholly displaced gas, which has certain advantages of cheapness, at least in some localities. The competition between these two agents has been advantageous to civilisation, for not only has each of them become cheaper and so more available, but the establishment of a number of subsidiary industries has also resulted. For example, research has created the electro-chemical industry—the preparations of the various soda and potash compounds, as well as the electric furnace which makes possible the smelting of rare ores such as tungsten, necessary to the new high speed steel, and also the cheap production of carbide of calcium, which is an important factor alike in the production of acetylene gas and the artificial nitrogenous manure, which is important to the future food supply of the world. Commercial electricity can now be produced either by water-turbines worked by waterfalls or by the waste heat of coke-ovens, and has the special advantage over steam of being capable of distribution over wide industrial areas from one central power-station, which makes it the harbinger of a new industrial revolution that may enable man to avoid the less pleasant features of the age of steam.

The Importance of Technical Education and Scientific Research.—It is perhaps hardly necessary here to trace out in detail the many improvements in the production of power that have been made in recent years. The steam-engine has been gradually perfected both in its locomotive and stationary form, and recent improvements in the steam-turbine promise to have far-reaching effects. The internal combustion engine, driven by liquid fuel, *e.g.* petrol, benzol, or even ordinary petroleum, has made possible not only the motor-car and the motor-wagon, itself the parent

of the armoured car and the "tank," but also the submarine, the aeroplane, and the airship, of which the commercial possibilities are even greater than their value in war. Gradually business men are becoming alive to the importance of technical education and scientific research. Firms in Germany and America and to some extent in Great Britain also have found it profitable to engage the services of expert chemists, electricians, and engineers to solve scientific problems which promise commercial advantages, and in the Royal College of Science at London a beginning has been made with the national endowment of scientific research. The object of the application of science to industry is to bring about the most economical utilisation of the natural resources of the earth: as population increases the happiness of mankind can only be ensured if science discovers how to increase the food supply necessary for our sustenance and to multiply the sources of mechanical power upon which depend alike our leisure to enjoy life and our capacity to make provision for the future. Athenian democracy obtained education and leisure for its favoured members by its exploitation of a slave class: the prosperity of a modern democracy depends upon its successful development of mechanical inventions for the common good.

5. SOCIALISM, TRADE UNIONISM, AND KINDRED MOVEMENTS.

The Three Phases of Socialism.—The European Socialist movement can be divided into three phases: the Utopian, identified with Saint-Simon and Fourier in France and Robert Owen in England; the Revolutionary, as preached by Louis Blanc and Proudhon in France; and the Philosophic Socialism of the German Jew Karl Marx. The

second and third phases have only indirectly influenced democratic thought in England, for the growing liberalism of the constitution made violent propaganda unnecessary. Moreover, the practical nature of the British workman led him to suspect extreme measures, and he was content to struggle for piecemeal reforms.

Schemes of Robert Owen.—The father of English Socialism was Robert Owen, and its triumphs took the form of factory legislation and the development of co-operation and trade unionism. Owen's own nebulous and unpractical ideals were discredited by the failure of his communist experiments at New Harmony and Queenswood, and his Grand National Consolidated Trades Union¹ of 1833, a "syndicalist" scheme to obtain a universal eight hours day by a universal strike, was no more successful than earlier attempts, such as Doherty's in 1829, to organise all the workers of the country into one trades union, so as to enable them to fight their employers. The Acts of 1824 and 1825 had given the trade unions little more than the bare right to exist, and they had to content themselves with local craft unions and a less ambitious programme. These unions were too small in size and too weak financially to oppose the employers, especially in a time of bad trade, and not only was it doubtful how far they might peacefully "picket," *i.e.* persuade non-strikers to join their ranks, but it was also more than doubtful if they had any legal means of safeguarding their accumulated funds from dishonest officials.

The Co-operative Movement.—While the French Socialists were preaching the "organisation of labour" and "the right to work," the English working classes began to

¹ A trades union was a union composed of men of different crafts : a trade union, on the contrary, was composed of men of a single craft.

carry out a less ambitious programme with more success. Robert Owen had maintained that "whereas in isolation our powers exceed our wants, in co-operation our wants exceed our powers." The inference was that even by voluntary action it was possible to eliminate the profits of the middle-man, and by a clubbing together of savings to trade more advantageously. The first co-operative store was that opened by the Rochdale pioneers in 1844. It proved successful, thanks to the devotion of its humble founders, and the movement, defended and helped by the Christian Socialists Maurice, Hughes, and Kingsley, survived even the Chartist fiasco of 1848. Before the end of the century most great towns and many country districts had large and flourishing co-operative societies, and the financial position of the movement was greatly strengthened by the foundation of the Co-operative Wholesale Society in 1863.

The C.W.S., as it is familiarly known, is a joint stock society of which the shares are held by the various local retail societies, and it owns steamships, corn mills, bakeries and other facilities for competition with even the largest private firms. However, the success of the co-operative movement has been most conspicuous when it confined itself to distribution; numerous attempts have been made to carry on purely productive enterprises by co-operative methods, but from want of capital, and still more from lack of expert management, no great success has been achieved as yet. Schemes of profit-sharing, such as that of the South London Gas Company, have been more successful, and many earnest students of social problems welcome the increasing tendency among capitalists to see in Labour Co-partnership schemes a solution of their difficulties with trade unions.¹

¹ It is interesting in this connection to recall J. S. Mill's famous chapter on "The probable future of the labouring classes," especially

Formation of the "Amalgamated" Trade Unions. Their Success.—Gradually the workmen learned the importance of wider craft unions and the accumulation of funds by the avoidance of small local strikes. In 1850 the Amalgamated Society of Engineers was formed—the first of the many national craft unions. During the "sixties" the control of the trade union movement came more into the hands of a "junta" composed of the London officials of the chief unions, who wisely discouraged strikes where possible and devoted themselves to the task of building up strong financial reserves. So skilfully did they negotiate with the masters that they won the confidence of the latter without losing that of the men. The "junta" urged strict obedience alike to the rules of the unions and the agreements made with employers, but the violence of some of the extreme workmen at Sheffield and elsewhere in 1867 almost fatally compromised their work. A few important concessions were gained from Parliament: in 1867 the funds of the unions were safeguarded from dishonest officials, in the following year the law of "master and servant" was modified in the direction of making most instances of breach of contract civil and not criminal offences, and finally an Act of 1871 made it possible for trade unions to obtain recognition as legal corporations on easy terms. However, the Whig capitalists were not reassured and were able to induce Gladstone in 1871 to pass the Criminal Law Amendment Act in a form which indirectly revived some of the harsher features of the old Combination Laws.

his prophecy that "the relation of masters and workpeople will be gradually superseded by partnership, in one of two forms: in some cases, association of the labourers with the capitalist; in others, and perhaps finally in all, the association of labourers among themselves."

Disraeli and Trade Unionism.—Disraeli probably owed his victory at the elections of 1874 very largely to the resentment of the trade unionists, who actually succeeded in returning two Labour members, Burt and Macdonald, to Parliament. The new Premier was willing to conciliate the workers and not only passed a useful series of Labour laws in 1875, but also in 1876 amended the Act of 1871 in the direction desired by the trade union leaders. This conciliatory policy, while it probably postponed for a generation the appearance of a political Labour Party in Parliament, had a marked effect on the growth of trade unionism, and during the next twenty years or so most of the skilled and many of the unskilled workmen organised themselves in unions and contented themselves with their legal right to strike when negotiations failed. Although the cycle of bad trade that began in the late "seventies" adversely affected some of the trade unions, the set-back was but temporary.

Karl Marx and "Class-conscious" Socialism.—The trade union movement in England indeed developed on lines quite different from that on the Continent, where it became identified with the philosophic socialism of Karl Marx, who had fled from Germany in consequence of his share in the revolutionary movement of 1848 and lived a hard life as an exile mainly in Paris and London. His ambition was to unite the working men of all countries in one powerful organisation. In 1873 he published the first volume of *Capital*, which became the text-book of what is known as "class-conscious socialism," and teaches that the socialist state is the inevitable economic outcome of the past history of social development, and that the interests of capital and labour are necessarily quite distinct, since under the existing organisation of society the former is able to appropriate to its own use the "surplus-

value"¹ produced by the latter. At an earlier date, in 1864, he had founded the Old International—"The International Society of Working Men"—with the cry "Working men of all countries, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains; you have a world to gain." Actually Marx was not in favour of revolutionary violence, and by 1873 the followers of the Russian anarchist Bakunin had wrecked the International by the violence of their programme. Only a few of the English trade unionists were prepared to go even as far as Marx, and before 1873 most of them had deserted him.

Industrial Conciliation.—The English trade unions were by no means in favour of extreme proposals, and as a rule preferred to take advantage of an Act of 1876 which allowed them as friendly societies to build up a system of out-of-work and sick benefits as well as to prepare for strikes and lock-outs. So little sympathy had some of the trade union leaders in the north of England with the Marxian gospel of class-consciousness that they gradually worked out in common with the wiser employers a system of industrial conciliation. Elaborate but well-understood regulations exist under which disputes, whether local or general, can be settled without cessation of work, and a feeling of mutual respect is slowly but surely growing up between the workman and his employer, which may in the end make co-partnership possible.

Trade Unionism and the Unskilled.—Trade unionism among the unskilled workers was for many years a comparative failure; partly because their wages were too small to allow them to build up a fighting fund, but also

¹ By "surplus-value" he meant the difference between the total product of labour and the minimum cost of keeping the labourer alive. It links on to the Wages Fund theory.

largely because it was easy for employers to fill the places of such as withdrew their labour. During the seventies the Agricultural Labourers' Union founded by Joseph Arch met with some success in raising the wages of many of that class, but after 1879 the membership decreased till it collapsed in 1894. Local revivals of Arch's movement have taken place, and in some districts, partly by strikes but more generally by the force of popular opinion and the scarcity of labour, agricultural wages have increased somewhat of recent years; but it is significant that when in 1917 the State guaranteed the farmer a fixed price for home-grown cereals it insisted on fixing a minimum wage of 25s. a week for the agricultural labourer, as it recognised how impossible it was for that figure to be reached under free competition.

Of recent years trade unionism has made considerable progress among the dockers and transport workers generally, and an attempt has been made by the Gasworkers and General Labourers' Union to provide a rallying ground for unskilled labour as a whole. However, although the success of the London Dock strike of 1889 was largely due to the popular sympathy it evoked, later attempts of organisations such as the Transport Workers' Union to secure concessions by movements almost equal to a national strike were widely resented. Such revivals of the strike policy—sometimes known as the New Unionism—have been more popular among the less skilled workmen since 1889, for the older unions generally have continued their policy of conciliation and compromise.

Establishment of a Ministry of Labour.—This policy of "direct action," as it is sometimes called, has undoubtedly been affected by the contemporary French movement known as Syndicalism, of which the programme is the control by workmen of the exercise of their craft solely in their own

interests, with the ultimate object of the expropriation of the employing class.¹ However, as few of the English trade union leaders are even nominally followers of Marx, Syndicalism in its extreme forms has been repudiated in favour of conciliation under State auspices: the Board of Trade has had authority since 1896 to approach both parties in a trade dispute with a view to conciliation, and in 1911 a joint panel of employers and representatives of labour was established with a permanent official of the Board as chairman. As of recent years the employers as well as their workmen have formed strong federations, local disputes soon tend to become national, and the State cannot remain passive. The Great War produced the State factory and the "controlled" establishment, and the laboriously constructed system of trade union restrictions was temporarily laid by in the national interest. Occasionally trade disputes arose, but the establishment in 1917 of a Ministry of Labour with wide powers opened up a fresh chapter in the relations between Capital and Labour.

Evolution of the Labour Party.—The appointment of a Ministry of Labour is not unconnected with the appearance of the Labour Party in the House of Commons. Burt and Macdonald had taken their seats as Advanced Liberals in 1874, and for many years longer the more important leaders of the trade union movement were content to be classed as Advanced Liberals or Radicals, for Disraeli's concessions in 1875 and 1876 had removed most of the special trade unionist grievances. However, one result of the trade depression of the "eighties" was the proposal for the formation of a Socialist Labour party on the lines of the

¹ In this programme the Syndicalists have the support of the English "Guild" Socialists, who advocate the control of industry by a series of self-governing craft guilds of producers under the superintendence of a National Guild, or Guild Congress. See G. D. H. Cole, *Chaos and Order in Industry* (Methuen, 1920).

Marxian Social Democrats of Germany. In 1893 there was organised the Independent Labour Party, which, however, contained middle class members, and, though Socialist, was not exclusively Marxian, as were some of its smaller socialist rivals such as the Social Democratic Party, originally founded in 1880 by William Morris and H. M. Hyndman as the Democratic Federation. The Independent Labour Party was largely the result of the somewhat earlier Fabian movement, itself the result of the influence of two Americans, Henry George, the apostle of the Single Tax, *i.e.* on land values, and the utopian dreamer Thomas Davidson, upon a group of brilliant young men in London. The Fabians were essentially sociologists and economists of the historic school who distrusted the facile generalisations of Marx and were content to allow their ideas on social reform to permeate all ranks of society. This policy secured them a hearing, and in 1900 the trade unions and the Independent Labour Party coalesced to form the Labour Representation Committee, which formally adopted the name of the Labour Party in 1906.

The Taff Vale Case.—This rapid crystallisation of the Labour Party was due very largely to the judge's decision in the Taff Vale case of 1901 that a trade union could be sued *as such* for the misdeeds of its members. This decision, which was confirmed by the House of Lords, took the trade unionists by surprise, and even the Conservative working men whom Disraeli, Randolph Churchill, and Chamberlain had inspired with confidence feared that their accumulated funds were in danger. Accordingly at the election of 1906 the Labour candidates won 29 seats, and they could count on the assistance of miners' members. After some hesitation the new Liberal Government agreed to pass the Trades' Disputes Act, which conceded most of the demands of the unions.

The Osborne Judgment.—Having safeguarded their funds, many of the moderate trade unionists ceased to sympathise with the Labour Party, and in 1909 the Osborne judgment accepted their view that the recently introduced compulsory levies for the support of Labour representatives on public bodies were illegal. The Liberal Government refused to reverse the decision by statute, but in 1911 it introduced the payment of members of Parliament. However, this expedient did not help the Labour members to public bodies other than the House of Commons, and the abolition of the compulsory levy has probably affected to a serious extent Labour representation on local governing bodies, although it has freed Labour members somewhat from the power of the party caucus.

The Great War has affected the future of the Labour Party in two main ways: it has seriously damaged the prestige of the International Marxian section, while it has secured for Labour a definite share in the various coalition governments and the general acceptance of many of its ideas on social reform.

6. THE EMPIRE AND THE FISCAL PROBLEM.

“Fair Trade” and Tariff Reform.—Ever since the era of depression in the late seventies which coincided with the beginning of German and American industrial competition, there has existed a steadily growing tendency to challenge the current fiscal system. It was alleged that the achievements of Peel, Gladstone, and Cobden had resulted in free *imports* only and not free trade, and that England’s manufacturing industry as well as her agriculture was threatened with ruin. There was a very active “Fair” Trade movement during the “eighties,” led by Farrer Ercroft, which advocated the imposition of retaliatory duties on manu-

factures, but it died down when trade began to improve. In 1903 Joseph Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, resigned from the Balfour Cabinet to be the apostle of a new protective movement known as Tariff Reform; its programme was the reorganisation of the Empire as an economic unity, with a protective tariff against foreign nations and mutual preference granted by the various self-governing parts of the Empire to each other.

Growth of Foreign Competition.—Although Chamberlain's movement was directly inspired by the marvellous development of the Colonies and their attitude during the Boer War, the way for it had been prepared by the critics of Cobdenism, who had convinced many people that there was at any rate a case for enquiry, since so much of our food supply came from overseas and might be endangered if the expected European war broke out. Moreover, it was generally admitted that except for the export of coal—a valuable and irreplaceable raw material—our exports had not increased either in value or amount as much as those of our nearest rivals, while, on the contrary, the latter had increased their exports of manufactures to the United Kingdom and were becoming formidable rivals both in our colonies and in neutral markets. The fear of unemployment might have secured the new movement a hearing among the workers as favourable as that which experience of foreign competition—both legitimate and unfair—secured it among many of the employers outside Lancashire, but for the belief that any revival of the duties on corn would affect the price of food, and so bring down the value of real wages.

The Question of the Food Supply.—Accordingly the tariff reformers attempted to prove that neither cheap food nor British trade supremacy was due to Cobdenism. They quoted statistics to show that the price of wheat was

really falling steadily between 1815 and 1846, and that no pronounced fall in price occurred, after 1846, until the close of the American Civil War brought the chance for the Bessemer steel rail, which opened up the wheat lands of the United States by rendering less costly the "long haul" to the coast. Increase of trade made return cargoes profitable, and so the price of wheat fell further and completed the ruin of the older English agriculture, thus falsifying the comforting prophecies of Cobden that the English farmer would have the protection of distance, which would prevent any large importation. The strongest argument for Colonial Preference was that the United States were consuming more and more of their own wheat, and that the price in England would rise steadily unless the Colonies were encouraged to increase the area under wheat. The immense emigration to the Colonies, especially to Canada, in the early years of the twentieth century promised to make this increase possible, and it was asserted that a flourishing agricultural population in the Colonies would supply a profitable market for our manufactures equal in time to the one lost in Europe.

Criticism of Cobdenism.—The tariff reformers adopted the view of Frederick List, the champion of the German protective national policy, that England's pre-eminence in industry and manufactures during the first half of the nineteenth century was not due to the adoption of free trade, but to the fact that while the nations of the Continent were a prey to war and revolution she had been able to take advantage of the new machinery and processes for manufacturing iron and steel, and so had secured a long start of her rivals. England alone for many years was able to supply manufactures, machinery, railway lines and engines which less advanced nations required, but they maintained that the profits and foreign investments thus

made were not an unmixed blessing, as they helped to develop other lands and so raise up possible competitors later; instead of developing, for example, Canada and Australia, British capital had helped to develop the United States and Argentina. They maintained that Cobden had misled the nation by teaching it to believe that foreign nations would acquiesce in an international division of labour that would make Britain the workshop of the world. They explained the prosperity of the "fifties and sixties" not by free trade, but by the gold discoveries in California and Australia, which opened new markets that only Britain could supply. Foreign nations were once more held back by the series of wars fought by the United States, France, Prussia, Austria, Sardinia and Denmark down to 1871, which made them for a time also customers of Britain.

The New Protection.—They traced the competition of the United States and Germany to the national protective policy those nations had adopted on the return of peace, and they pointed to the success of protection in democratic Canada and Australia. England was the only free trade country even in name, and the only European market where foreign nations could "dump" their superfluous stock of manufactures. The foreign manufacturer, secure of his home market, could run his machinery at full pressure; by distributing his standing charges for machinery and supervision over a very large product he could decrease the cost of production and undersell the British manufacturer both in Britain and abroad; Britain had no longer a monopoly of machinery or inventions, and, although technical education might do something, it was quite unable to prevent England from losing one manufacture after another, until she became merely a purveyor of such raw materials as coal, which would not last indefinitely.

Finally they made an appeal to trade unionists, pointing out that under the existing fiscal system Factory Acts and good conditions of labour such as trade unionists demanded handicapped British trade in competition with that of countries where industrial conditions were inferior: if the workman desired to be protected from exploitation, he must see to it that his own products were protected from the competition of goods made abroad under less favourable conditions.

Causes of Chamberlain's failure.—Chamberlain's programme split the Unionist party, largely on the question of the taxation of food, although he maintained that it was quite feasible to remit the duties on tea, etc., in proportion as others were placed on corn. Probably the scheme he proposed was not sufficiently thought out, and the tariff reformers on some points showed a tendency to over-state their case and confuse what was with what might be. The election of 1906, though not fought exclusively on the tariff issue, was hailed by many as a victory for free trade and the death-knell of Imperial preference. Many tariff reformers attempted to invent substitutes for the unpopular food taxes, and the movement languished somewhat after Chamberlain's break-down in health, partly in consequence of the Liberal party's struggle with the House of Lords over the land clauses of the Budget of 1909. The Liberals hoped that the revenue which would ultimately be produced by the taxation of land values would disprove the charge that free trade finance was bankrupt, but the whole problem of the reorganisation of the national finances and the relations between the different members of the Empire received an entirely new orientation by the outbreak of the Great War in August 1914.

The Colonies and the Great War.—The Colonies threw

themselves whole-heartedly into the war, and thus answered the question as to whether they really considered their interests identical with those of the mother-country. The aid they gave was quite unconditional, but the statesmen of the Old Country without distinction of party agreed that no peace could be made which did not take into consideration the wishes of the Colonies, and the magnificent loyalty of the Indian princes and peoples, which vied with that of the self-governing lands of the Empire, made it equally necessary that the old makeshift relations between the mother-country and her children should be recast.

The Making of the Dominion of Canada.—The rise of the self-governing colonies to vigorous national life is one of the outstanding features of the past half-century. The first Colonial Federation—that of British North America—was the direct consequence of the grant of self-government through a responsible ministry to the various colonies in 1841 and succeeding years in accordance with the recommendations of Lord Durham's famous Report. Durham had indeed originally proposed such a federation as the most likely cure for intercolonial friction, but the time was not ripe, and he wisely contented himself with the union of Upper Canada (Ontario) and Lower Canada (Quebec) on equal terms. The Repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 and of the Navigation Acts in 1849 deprived Canada alike of the advantages and the drawbacks of the Imperial connection, and the prevailing *laissez-faire* policy of the Home Government not only allowed Canada to erect a tariff wall even against British trade in 1858, but also permitted her to conclude the Elgin-Marcy commercial treaty with the United States in 1854. However, thanks partly to the jealousy of the New England manufacturers and partly to the attitude of some Canadians

during the American Civil War, the treaty was allowed to lapse, and the Canadians on their part henceforth tended to draw closer to the mother-country.

Meanwhile immigration had left the French Canadians hopelessly outnumbered in United Canada, and yet the political parties were so evenly divided that no stable Ministry could be formed. Moreover, in 1866 there were fears of an invasion by American-Irish Fenians, even if war did not result between Britain and the United States over the escape of the Confederate commerce-destroyer *Alabama* from Birkenhead in 1862. The peculiar difficulties of the eastern or maritime provinces had evoked proposals for a closer union among themselves, and the offer of United Canada to join the movement was warily welcomed. The assent of the French Canadians was won by the promise of provincial Home Rule in Canada East, to be renamed Quebec, and after conferences at Charlottetown and Quebec in 1864 the new Dominion of Canada was born in 1867, and by 1874 all the British Colonies of North America had joined it with the exception of Newfoundland.

The Canadian "National" Policy and Imperial Preference.—At first the economic situation of the Dominion was unsatisfactory: trade and population were small and manufactures almost non-existent. Mackenzie, the Liberal Premier, in 1874 set up a "tariff for revenue only" on the lines of Gladstone's free trade legislation, but the universal commercial depression of the "seventies" affected Canada so adversely that in 1879 Macdonald, the Conservative Premier, was able with little difficulty to introduce a system of high protection of Canadian industries known as the National Policy. Returning prosperity and Liberal proposals for commercial union, *i.e.* reciprocity, with the United States kept the Protectionists in power till 1896,

although Macdonald failed in his scheme to secure reciprocal preference between the Dominion and the mother-country. Meanwhile many Liberals had been somewhat weaned from their free trade views, partly by the attitude of the United States and partly by the undoubted prosperity of Canada under Macdonald's system. Accordingly the new Liberal Premier, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, contented himself with modifying rather than reversing the protectionist policy of his predecessor, but, although himself of French descent, he took the bold step of granting the United Kingdom an unconditional preference on her manufactures imported into Canada.

The Attitude of the British Government.—Laurier's action at once raised an important question. If the British Government accepted it, existing commercial treaties with Belgium and Germany must be denounced, and it was certain that Canada would have to face a tariff war. The treaties were denounced, the amount of the preference was steadily increased, until in general one third of the duty on certain articles was remitted, and Canada won the tariff war. Laurier's policy was generally approved in Canada and appreciated in the United Kingdom. However, while the Unionists, thanks to Chamberlain, desired to remake the tariff in order to grant Canada some equivalent concession, the Liberals opposed any return to protection even to assist Imperial Federation. As has been already explained, Chamberlain's scheme was largely wrecked by the proposed food taxes, but events in Australia and South Africa made it impossible for interest in Imperial Preference to die down.

The Colonisation of Australia and New Zealand.—Australia was claimed for Britain by Captain Cook, who took possession at Botany Bay near Sydney in 1770, but it was not until 1787 that the first attempt at colonisation

even by convicts was made. However, the discovery of gold near Ballarat, in Victoria, in 1851 caused an immense inrush of settlers, and self-government on the Canadian model was granted in 1855 to the separate colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, and Tasmania.¹ The group of islands known as New Zealand, lying 1,200 miles to the east, also discovered by Cook, came under British influence between 1815 and 1840, in which year the local chiefs ceded the sovereignty to Queen Victoria by the Treaty of Waitangi. Thanks to the fertile soil and mild climate the settlers prospered greatly, and by 1865 the islands had become an united self-governing colony.

Character of their Development.—The development of these Australasian colonies proceeded steadily on almost parallel lines, and their population being recruited almost solely from the United Kingdom they escaped the racial troubles of Canada and South Africa. Their economic development, except in the case of New South Wales, was on more or less protectionist lines, and their distance from the mother-country combined with the vast spaces of their land fostered the growth of a vigorous democracy and a love of independence often pushed to extremes. Population, roads, and railways were alike wanting, and for many years there was no response to the suggestion of the Home government that they should federate at least for the purposes of a common tariff and matters of joint concern. It was not until 1885 that the Imperial Parliament found it expedient to act, but in that year it passed a Bill allowing the Australian colonies to federate in their own way and in their own time.

¹ Western Australia received responsible government in 1890 and Queensland, which separated from New South Wales in 1859, had it from the first.

The Commonwealth of Australia.—However, the desire for federation grew but slowly, and then only because of practical difficulties in the way of a continuation of the existing system. These difficulties were connected with the numerous conflicting tariffs, the fear of a possible German or Japanese invasion, the desire for a "White Australia," and the feeling in favour of joint colonial action on social and economic matters such as old age pensions, railways, rivers, and communications generally. The powerful personality of Sir Henry Parkes made them realise more and more "the crimson thread of kinship that runs through us all," and finally after ten years of continued effort the "Commonwealth of Australia" was born in 1900.¹ The new constitution, wholly the work of Australia, was a compromise between that of the United States and that of Canada. It is suggestive that although the Labour Party speedily became the most important political body, the new Commonwealth determined on a policy of Protection and at the same time instituted compulsory service in a citizen army and created a local Australian navy. However, Australia, like Canada and New Zealand, had sent military aid during the Boer War, and in 1905 it followed Canada in granting preference to British goods. New Zealand had passed similar legislation in 1903. In neither case was the continuance of the preference made dependent on reciprocal concessions by the mother-country, nor, on the other hand, did the statesmen of either Australia or New Zealand show any intention of sacrificing the special interests of their own country.

The South African Colonies.—It was perhaps natural

¹ New Zealand decided not to join the Commonwealth largely owing to the distance, and was accordingly recognised as a separate Dominion in 1907.

for Canada and Australia to federate and grant tariff preferences to the United Kingdom, but the course taken by events in South Africa was more unexpected. These two lands were predominantly British, but in South Africa there was and is probably a slight majority among the population of Dutch descent, and British policy in South Africa had been singularly inept, if well-meaning, throughout the whole of the nineteenth century. Cape Colony, finally annexed in 1815, had a strong Dutch population, especially around Cape Town, and self-government had been thrust upon the colony against its will in 1872, largely it was said as a means by which the Home Government could shuffle off responsibility for native troubles. Natal had been forcibly taken from Boer settlers in 1843, and the Boers in the Orange Free State, the descendants of early "voortrekkers" or emigrants from Cape Colony in 1836, found themselves again proclaimed British subjects in 1848. Some of them moved across the Vaal river and in 1852 by the Sand River Convention were allowed to form the independent state of the Transvaal. Two years later another convention was signed at Bloemfontein by which the Orange Free State was abandoned, against the wish of many of the Boers.

Troubles with the Dutch.—The Colonial policy of the Home Government pleased nobody in South Africa. The two independent Boer states did not always agree, and, to make matters worse, not only had the Transvaalers constant trouble with the natives and among themselves, but they also fell foul of the British Government: they attempted to expand towards Delagoa Bay, and talking about an "Afrikander" nation they claimed the right to have a consul at Berlin in 1868. The situation was complicated by the evident intention of the British Government to interpret the "independence" of the Boer Republics as re-

ferring merely to their internal affairs, while reserving to itself the vague rights of suzerainty over all South Africa. Lord Carnarvon, who had been largely responsible for the passage of the Canadian Act of Confederation through the British Parliament, desired to take advantage of a growing feeling in favour of South African Confederation, especially in the Orange Free State, and in 1874 and 1875 sent out Froude the historian to strengthen the movement. Unfortunately Froude was quite unfitted for the task; he openly opposed the Cape Ministry, and he inflamed racial jealousy by his frank admiration of certain Old Testament characteristics in the Boers which appealed to him and his teacher Carlyle more than to the more progressive South Africans. Carnarvon managed to pass through the Imperial Parliament in 1877 the South Africa Act, which allowed the provinces to form a confederation on the lines of that of Canada, but nothing immediately was done.

Annexation of the Transvaal.—It is perhaps unnecessary to trace in any detail the story of the annexation of the Transvaal by Sir Theophilus Shepstone in 1877. The immediate cause was the threatening attitude of the Zulu chief Cetewayo, and the annexation was intended to be the preliminary to a grant of complete local self-government under a scheme of confederation which Sir Bartle Frere, the new High Commissioner, proposed to carry out. When the Zulus had been defeated, Paul Krüger, leader of the extreme party among the Boers, who were alarmed at the influx of English settlers and angered by the new taxation, induced the new Premier, Gladstone, to reverse the annexation in 1881. Unfortunately Gladstone had not troubled to safeguard the interests of either the British settlers or the natives, and Krüger's followers interpreted his complaisance, quite wrongly, as due to their victory in a skirmish at Majuba Hill. Three years later, in 1884,

Kruger persuaded Gladstone to make the Convention of London, in which the Transvaal took the title of the South African Republic; this new convention was the source of future trouble, for it did not contain the magic word "suzerainty" which appeared in the Convention of Pretoria.

The Discovery of Gold at Johannesburg produces the Outlander Problem.—It is quite a mistake to suppose that all the Transvaal Boers sympathised with the "hermit" policy favoured by Kruger's immediate followers, and probably a majority of the Cape Dutch and a considerable minority in the Orange Free State were in favour of a closer union of the two white races in South Africa; the leading Dutchmen realised that the Home Government, while loth to interfere in the internal affairs of South Africa, would not allow men of British descent to be unfairly treated, and that in view of the numerical preponderance of the black races it was necessary for all the white men in all the colonies to act together. However, in these early days no one could possibly foresee the transformation that was to be brought about in South Africa by the discovery, in the very year of the Convention of London, of valuable deposits of gold on the site of the modern Johannesburg. In a few years there sprang up a city of 100,000 inhabitants—mainly British "Uitlanders" (outlanders or immigrants)—and in accordance with British traditions they demanded a share in the government of the country, which they maintained was still legally a part of the Empire.

Anglo-German Rivalry in Africa.—Meanwhile Britain's possessions in Africa had increased, for she had occupied Egypt in 1882 and in 1884 the Berlin Conference had partitioned most of Africa among the nations of Europe. Germany was Britain's rival both in East Africa and South West Africa, and her settlement in the latter district had alarmed many South Africans. Cecil Rhodes, the leader of

an Anglo-Dutch Imperialist party at the Cape, was personally interested in the diamond mines of Kimberley and the gold mines of Johannesburg, as well as in the Central African province of Rhodesia. When Krüger refused to meet the wishes of the Uitlanders, Rhodes saw in his refusal an anti-British tendency, which was probably at first due rather to distrust of the newcomers than to anything else. However, South Africa's mineral wealth had started a boom in English trade which made the ambitions of Rhodes popular, and that leader's characteristic energy, not to say impatience, wrecked the Anglo-Dutch alliance in Cape Colony when at the end of 1895 the foolish "Jameson Raid" into the Transvaal, said by the Dutch to have been engineered by Rhodes, brought Krüger and the British Government face to face. A congratulatory telegram from the German Emperor to the Boer President encouraged the latter to refuse all concessions to the Uitlanders, who now outnumbered the Boers, while it convinced most Englishmen that the only alternative to complete federation of South Africa under the British flag was war.

The South African War and its Results.—Unfortunately Krüger and Rhodes were able to marshal the white settlers into two hostile camps, and the South African War (1889-1902) resulted. The German Emperor failed Krüger, and the British Colonies rallied round the mother-country. Krüger fled to Europe, where he soon died, and Rhodes did not long survive him. On June 1st, 1902, General Botha, the ablest of the Boer leaders and one of the more moderate, signed the Peace of Vereeniging, accepting the policy of reconciliation under the British flag. Gifts and loans of money to the Boers soon restored them to prosperity, and when Campbell-Bannerman, who became Premier in 1906, boldly granted self-government to the Trans-

vaal the same year and to the Orange River Colony in 1907, Botha and Smuts his colleague were willing to accept confederation. There was already in existence a South African Customs Union which had granted preference to the United Kingdom in 1906.

The Union of South Africa.—In 1908 a convention representing the four colonies after several months of careful deliberation drafted a constitution creating the “Union of South Africa,” and by June 1909 it was accepted by all the colonies and then enacted by an Imperial statute. The Union was more centralised than either the Dominion of Canada or the Australian Commonwealth, as it had more common problems to deal with. The experiment has been a great success, for it has reconciled the British and the Boers and left the irreconcilables a small minority. Botha was the first Union premier, and he and Smuts by suppressing the rebellion of the Boer extremists and by conquering, one German South West Africa and the other German East Africa, have vindicated South Africa’s place in the Empire.

The Future of the Empire.—The Great War has made a reorganisation of the Empire inevitable, and such a reorganisation will vitally affect the social and economic life of the English people. The Imperial Conference held in 1917 has accepted the principle of Imperial Preference, thus completing the various concessions already made by the Colonies to the mother-country and to each other, and the British Government has agreed, although the details of the relation of the mother-country with the Allies as well as with the Colonies can only be settled after the war. It is clear, however, that an essential part of any future arrangement will be that the peoples of the Empire have the first call upon the raw materials and food found within the Empire, and that the financial resources of the Em-

pire must be used to develop the lands of the Empire. State-assisted emigration to the vacant lands under the British flag will go far to solve the problem of poverty, and there will be no sense of exile or loss under the new conditions. As the Empire will be really a democratic Commonwealth composed of self-governing federations, the local units will receive the fullest freedom to regulate their self-regarding conditions, and the duties of the central authority will only extend to the common interests of the whole. The Treaty of Versailles signed June 28th, 1919 between the Allies and Germany contained as an integral part of itself the Covenant of the League of Nations. The former enemy colonies were ceded not to the conquerors but to the League of Nations, which was to entrust mandates for their administration to such of its members as were willing to hold them in trust for the benefit of the inhabitants. The duration and nature of the mandate varied according to the character of the country controlled under it, but the theory resembled closely the position taken up by the British in India. Perhaps the working of the scheme may at first disappoint idealists, but the League of Nations professes to stand for the condemnation of war, and for the right of peoples to determine their own government. In sympathy with these ideas, the British Government decided to inaugurate in 1920 a new Constitution under which the Indian peoples received practical control over important functions of government, and it has met the discontent in Egypt by an offer to restrict its direct authority to the Canal Zone and the Soudan. Recognising no bar of race, creed, or colour, the British Empire can accept the League of Nations as an important step towards the realisation of the poet's dream of "The Parliament of man, the federation of the world."

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